Alan Moore • Jacen Burrows

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Compendium

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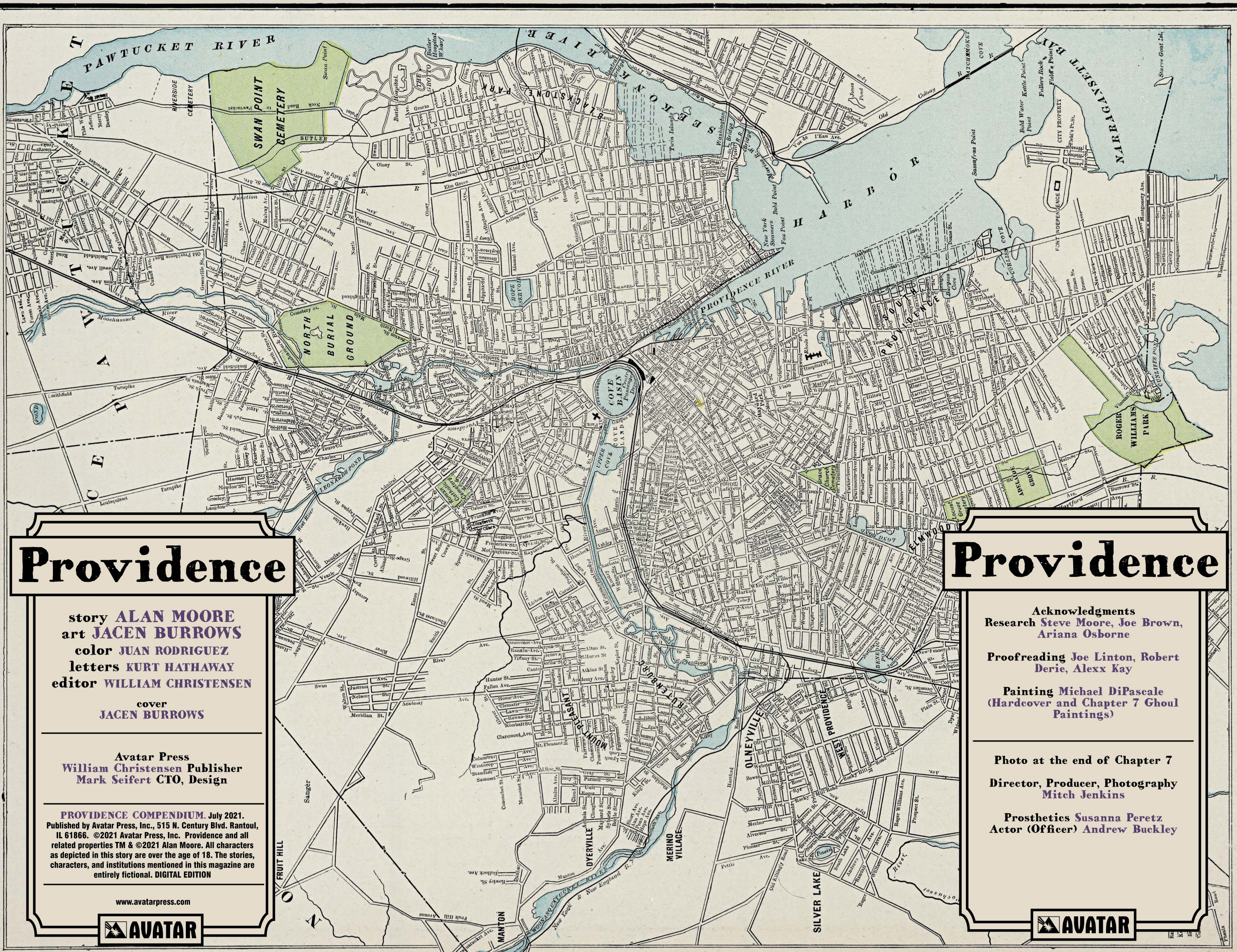

Providence

story ALAN MOORE
art JACEN BURROWS
color JUAN RODRIGUEZ
letters KURT HATHAWAY
editor WILLIAM CHRISTENSEN

cover
JACEN BURROWS

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AVATAR

CHAPTER 1

"But the big thing was Manhattan Bridge and the view of the New-York skyline there obtained. Right there I surrendered to Klei about the beauties of his home town. Out of the waters it rose at twilight; cold, proud, and beautiful; an Eastern city of wonder whose brothers the mountains are."

–To Maurice W. Moe,
May 18, 1922

Dear Jonathan, April 12th, 1919
Well, what a night! I could have listened to you read from Huysmans forever. You seemed to break through the mere words to the reality lying beyond them. As for afterwards (and you know what I mean, you naughty boy), it was the most wonderful fun yet. You were like a wild animal and
, what a night! I could have
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beyond them. As for aft erwards (and you know
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wonderful fun yet. You were like a wild animal and
"IN MY OPINION WE'VE THROWN AWAY EVERYTHING WORTHWHILE ABOUT WHAT WE HAD.
"USED TO BE WE WERE IN A POSITION OF TRUST, BUT WE LET ALL THAT GO..."

...AND NOW HERE WE ARE, WORKING UP STORIES FROM THIN AIR. WE'RE MORE LIKE... LIKE *DIME NOVELISTS* THAN NEWSPAPER MEN.
Y'KNOW, THAT DARNED HEARST, HE DRAGGED US ALL INTO THE GUTTER. TIME WAS, JOURNALISM WAS KNOWN FOR ITS COURAGE, BUT LOOK AT IT NOW.
IT'S A BADGE OF *SHAME* IS WHAT IT IS.
HMM.
I: THE YELLOW SIGN

WELL, THE TREATY PIECE IS ALL DONE, SO I'M AVAILABLE. DO YOU WANT I SHOULD GO SCARE SOMETHING UP?
LIKE WHAT? WE'VE GOT A HALF-PAGE TO FILL.
UH, MR. POSEY? MAYBE WE COULD RUN SOMETHING ON LEGENDS, LIKE THE JERSEY DEVIL...
BOBBY, WHAT WAS THAT BOOK SENT EVERYBODY CRAZY?
THAT SENT EVERYBODY..? OH, YOU MEAN *SOUS LE MONDE*; BACK IN THE 'EIGHTIES. I HARDLY THINK...
"*SOUS LE MONDE*"? WHAT, IS THAT FRENCH?
NO, IT WAS A ***REAL*** TITLE, THE BOOK HE TOLD ME ABOUT.
BOBBY, YOU KNOW THE ONE I MEAN. WAS IT "*THE YELLOW THING*", SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
OH, YOU'RE THINKING OF *THE KING IN YELLOW* BY ROBERT CHAMBERS.
SURE, BECAUSE IT SENT EVERYBODY CRAZY, RIGHT?
NO, THAT CAME OUT AROUND THE TURN OF THE CENTURY. CHAMBERS ALLEGEDLY BASED IT ON THE SCANDAL SURROUNDING *SOUS LE MONDE*.
BUT, I MEAN, WITH THE JERSEY DEVIL THERE'S A LOCAL ***CONNECTION***.
THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO FOUND DEVILISH HOOF-PRINTS IN THE SNOW ON THEIR ROOFS...
IN THE ***SNOW?*** MR. DIX, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, IT'S ***JUNE***. PEOPLE AREN'T THINKING ABOUT SNOW WHEN THEY'RE FRYING EGGS ON THE SIDEWALK.
AS I RECALL, THERE'S A LOCAL ELEMENT WITH THE *SOUS LE MONDE* STORY, TOO.

THERE WAS A DOCTOR WHO'D WRITTEN AN ESSAY ABOUT IT, LIVING ON... AH, HERE WE ARE. ON WEST FOURTEENTH STREET. A DOCTOR ALVAREZ...
HUH. MR. BLACK, I'M IMPRESSED. YOU'RE QUITE THE LITERARY FELLOW.
OH, BOBBY'S READ *EVERYTHING*.
SURE. HE'S ONLY BOTHERING WITH US UNTIL HE WRITES HIS *NOVEL*, I BET.
WELL, THAT'S MORE THAN A CHUMP LIKE *YOU* IS EVER GOING TO DO!
AW, PRISSY, COME ON. I WAS JUST KIDDING...
HA. WELL, MAYBE SOME DAY, IF PROVIDENCE ALLOWS.
NO, WE INTERVIEWED HIS LANDLADY MONTHS AGO ABOUT TROUBLE WITH ROUGHNECKS. SHE MENTIONED ALVAREZ AND I RECOGNISED THE NAME, THAT'S ALL.
HMM. YES, I REMEMBER THIS. SO WHAT'S THE STORY WITH THIS FRENCH NONSENSE?
HONESTLY, MR. POSEY. JUST ONE GLIMPSE AND PEOPLE ARE *DOOMED*.
WELL, WHEN *SOUS LE MONDE* WAS PUBLISHED, APPARENTLY SOME READERS WENT INSANE AND EVEN COMMITTED SUICIDE.
ROBERT CHAMBERS ATTRIBUTED SIMILAR RESULTS TO HIS FICTIONAL *KING IN YELLOW*.
WELL, I SUPPOSE WE'VE NOTHING BETTER. YOU COULD TALK TO THIS QUACK AND SEE IF HE KNOWS ANY GHOULISH ANECDOTES.
OH, I GET GOOSE-BUMPS JUST THINKING ABOUT IT.
LISTEN, DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP. FOR ALL I KNOW, ALVAREZ MIGHT BE A REAL STIFF. ANYWAY, HERE GOES.
WISH ME LUCK.

..AT HIM, SO BIG HE'S GROWN! SOON, HE WILL BE A MAN. GOD WILLING A DOCTOR, IF HE SHOULD STUDY HARD.
THE BEST DOCTOR IN WISCONSIN, HOW SHOULD YOU LIKE THAT? MARRIED TO SOME PRETTY GIRL...
OH, HE'S ONLY A CHILD! WHAT, NEXT YOU'RE PLANNING HIS FUNERAL?
NO, ROBERT, YOU...
HORN & HARDART
HORN & HARDART Co.
FACTORY & ELECTRIC SUPPLIES
KEYS
...DON'T LOVE YOU AND MOMMA, OF COURSE I DO.
BUT, POPPA, BEING A WRITER, A JOURNALIST, ANYTHING, IT MEANS SO MUCH TO ME...
AND WHAT, NOBODY CAN WRITE IN THIS PLACE? SUDDENLY THERE ARE NO NEWSPAPERS AROUND HERE?
ROBERT, WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN NEW YORK THAT'S NOT IN MILWAUKEE?

PIES
BEVERAGES
ROBERT! OVER HERE. GOOD TO SEE YOU.
DON'T TELL ME THAT AWFUL *HERALD* HAS SENT YOU OUT DIGGING DIRT ON THE *AUTOMATS?*
HA. NO, I'M ON MY WAY TO A STORY AND I NEEDED TO GET SOME LUNCH.
HOW ARE THINGS, CHARLES?
OH, YOU KNOW ME. STILL DRIFTING FROM ONE SUNKEN GARDEN TO THE NEXT.
BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU? I HAVEN'T SPOTTED YOU AROUND THE SQUARE IN AGES. ARE YOU STILL SEEING LILLIAN?
WELL, I'M STILL LIVING UP THERE IN THE SAME PLACE, BUT AS FOR MISS RUSSELL, NO. NO, WE BROKE UP.
IT WAS GETTING TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT, I GUESS. HOW'S VERA?
SAME AS EVER. STILL WEARING HER HAIR UP, BUT FOREVER DROPPING HAIRPINS.
SAY, WEREN'T YOU PLANNING ON WRITING A BOOK, I HEARD?
HUH. LOT OF PLANNING, NO WRITING. DON'T EVEN HAVE A SUBJECT YET, TO BE TRUTHFUL.
I WANT SOMETHING BIG, SOMETHING THAT CUTS TO THE HEART OF THIS COUNTRY AND THESE TIMES.
THAT TALKS ABOUT THINGS NOBODY'S DARED TALK ABOUT BEFORE.
YOU KNOW? NOT JUST ANOTHER SLICE OF LIFE IN THE CITY OF BACHELORS.

The New York Times.
ALLIES HAND REVISED TREATY TO GERMANS; BROCKDORFF AT ONCE STARTS FOR WEIMAR; REPLY INDICTS GERMANY FOR INHUMANITY
HORN & HARDART Co
...GOT YOURSELF A JOB, MR. BLACK.
NOW, A WORD OF ADVICE. YOU'RE A YOUNG MAN IN A BIG CITY WHERE WOMEN ARE AN AWFUL TEMPTATION.
YOUR PRIVATE LIFE IS, OF COURSE, YOUR OWN AFFAIR. JUST KEEP IT AWAY FROM WORK. DO WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER?
YES, MR. POSEY. ABSOLUTELY, SIR.

...RUSSELL. LILLIAN RUSSELL, SINCE YOU'RE ASKING.
HA HA. WELL, MISS RUSSELL, YOU'RE A LOT YOUNGER THAN I WAS EXPECTING.
IN FACT, DIDN'T I HEAR THAT YOU WERE LIVING UP ABOVE THE ARISTON WHEN THEY GOT RAIDED IN 1903?
MAYBE WE COULD GO SOMEWHERE AND YOU COULD TELL ME ALL YOUR GLAMOROUS SHOWBIZ STORIES...
5TH AVE
W. 14 ST.
MY GOD, THIS IS INCREDIBLE. I'VE NEVER KNOWN ANYBODY HAD SO MANY BOOKS. YOU'VE GOT GAUTIER, SWINBURNE, DE L'ISLE ADAM...
AND HERE'S ME THINKING YOU WERE JUST ANOTHER CHEAP, TAWDRY GOOD-TIME GIRL.
HONEY, TONIGHT THAT'S ***EXACTLY*** WHAT I AM.
NOW, COME OVER HERE. I'LL BE VENUS, YOU BE TANNHÄUSER...

317
IS THERE ANYBODY THERE?
HELLO?
HM.

¿SI?
MRS. ORTEGA? I'M ROBERT BLACK, FROM THE *NEW YORK HERALD*. YOU SPOKE TO US LAST YEAR, ABOUT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD BOYS.
I WONDER IF DR. ALVAREZ IS STILL STAYING HERE?
SI. I REMEMBER. BOYS WERE TROUBLE THEN, BUT TODAY NOT SO BAD.
DR. ALVAREZ, HE IS UPSTAIRS NOW. YOU COME IN, PLEASE.
ARE YOU SURE I WON'T BE INTERRUPTING ANYTHING? I COULD ALWAYS ARRANGE TO CALL LATER...
NO. NO, YOU WILL SEE HIM. SEÑOR ALVAREZ, HE IS GREAT MAN. HE SHOULD BE MORE IN NEWSPAPER.
BUT YOU MUST NOT TO TROUBLE HIM. MANY YEARS HE IS ILL.
AND YOU MUST BUTTON YOUR COAT.

¿SEÑOR ALVAREZ? ESTE CABALLERO ES DEL PERIÓDICO. COMO SIEMPRE LE DIGO, TODOS DEBERÍAN SABER DE USTED.
OH, MUY BIEN. PUEDE PASAR.
ESPERO VERLA MÁS TARDE, QUERIDA SEÑORITA ORTEGA.
LO VERÉ ESTA NOCHE... Y HÁBLELE BIEN DE USTED A ESTE JOVEN.
UM... DR. ALVAREZ, I'M ROBERT BLACK. I'M FROM THE *HERALD*. I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT...
B-BOY, IS IT ALWAYS THIS COLD UP HERE?
I'M AFRAID SO. IT IS FOR MY HEALTH. PLEASE COME THROUGH.
TH-THANK YOU. I'LL TRY NOT TO TAKE UP YOUR VALUABLE TIME...
C-CAN I SMELL AMMONIA?
YES. YOU UNDERSTAND? IT IS FOR THE COOLING SYSTEM. IN THE COLD, MY SYMPTOMS ARE EASED.
NOW, WHAT DID YOU WISH TO SPEAK ABOUT?

WELL, I, UH, I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT CLAUDE GUILLOT AND *SOUS LE MONDE*.
I BELIEVE YOU WROTE AN ESSAY FOR A SPANISH LITERARY MAGAZINE...
AHA! YES. YES, I DID. IT IS A COMICAL LITTLE BOOK. I THINK TOO OFTEN PEOPLE DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT. THEY...
OH DEAR. OH, THIS WILL NOT DO.
WHAT'S THAT? IS THERE SOMETHING..?
OH. OH, RIGHT. I SEE.
YOU CALLED AT AN AWKWARD TIME. IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT. HOW ARE YOU TO KNOW?
MRS. ORTEGA IS A VERY KIND WOMAN. I THINK I DO NOT DESERVE HER, YOU KNOW. HER HUSBAND ALSO IS DEAD A LONG TIME NOW.
OH, LOOK, PLEASE, I'M SURE HE IS. I'M NOT, I'M NOT HERE TO PASS COMMENT ON YOUR PRIVATE BUSINESS...
HA. YOUR FACE IS AS RED AS YOUR HAIR. PERHAPS OUR ANCESTORS MET BACK IN THE SFARDA, YES?
YOU SHOULD NOT BE EMBARRASSED THAT YOU CAUGHT ME MAKING LOVE, MR. BLACK.
LOVE IS THE ONLY SUBSTANTIAL THING. IT IS NOBLE IN ITS NOISES AND ITS ODOURS, I THINK.
FROM WHERE I LOOK AT THIS, TO NOT LOVE IS TO WASTE THE EXISTENCE. EVEN LIFE IS A SMALL MATTER BESIDE IT.
YOU SEE, IT IS NOT INTERRUPTED BY DEATH.
WITHOUT IT, THIS WORLD CANNOT BE ENDURED.

WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT IT, ANYWAY?
SOUS LE MONDE, I MEAN. WHY DID YOU THINK IT WAS COMICAL?
217
COMEDY, I THINK, IS MONSIEUR GUILLOT'S INTENTION.
HIS FOREMOST PERSONS, HIS CHARACTERS, THEY MAKE DEATH INTO THE ROMANCE.
THESE AESTHETES, THEY ARE ABSURD. THE VULGAR PEOPLE THEY DESPISE HAVE MORE LIFE. GUILLOT, HE MOCKS THEM.
I-I SUPPOSE YOU COULD READ IT THAT WAY. SO WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO *SOUS LE MONDE*?
IT IS VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE, ABOUT MANY THINGS.
MY MAIN INTEREST, THIS WAS IN ITS MENTION OF AN ARAB ALCHEMICAL TEXT. IT HAD CONNECTIONS TO MY WORK AT THE TIME.
"KITAB AL-HIKMAH AL-NAJMIYYA". IT MEANS *BOOK OF THE WISDOM OF THE STARS.*
I, UH, I DON'T THINK I EVER HEARD OF THAT.
IT IS NOT WELL KNOWN. FOR MANY YEARS IT WAS BELIEVED A JOKE TO BE, A FICTION.
BUT GUILLOT HAD READ IT, A BOOK WRITTEN BY KHĀLID IBN YAZĪD IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY.
THERE WERE UNUSUAL MEDICAL PROCEDURES DESCRIBED IN THIS WORK, GUILLOT CLAIMED.
AND THAT'S WHY YOU WERE INTERESTED? THE MEDICAL MATERIAL?

CERTAINLY. WITH MY COLLEAGUE DR. ESTES, WHO IS PASSED AWAY, TO PROLONG THE LIFE WAS FOR US A DUTY.
GUILLOT REPORTED, IN THE ARAB TEXT, FOUR METHODS FOR THIS. SOME, THE REVIVING OF CADAVERS, THE TRANSPLANTING OF SOULS, APPEARED MYSTICAL.
OTHERS, PERHAPS, WERE MORE SCIENTIFIC.
DID YOU EVER S-SEE THIS ARAB BOOK YOURSELF?
NO. BUT HERE IN AMERICA A COPY EXISTS, IT SEEMS. A MR. SUYDAM OF FLATBUSH WHO DEALS IN CURIOS, HE PROVIDED FOR US A TRANSCRIPT.
IT PROVED AUTHENTIC. IN THIS, *SOUS LE MONDE* WAS USEFUL.
FOR LITERATURE, THOUGH, I THINK MR. CHAMBERS' BOOK IS SUPERIOR.
THE K-KING IN YELLOW? YOU REALLY THINK SO?
WHY, YES. DO NOT VALUE AMERICA'S AUTHORS BELOW THE EUROPEANS, MR. BLACK.
CHAMBERS' WORK, IT IS ALMOST PROPHECY. HIS *REPAIRER OF REPUTATIONS*, SET IN OUR TIMES, SPEAKS OF WAR JUST CONCLUDED WITH GERMANY.
ALSO, HE PREDICTS THE LETHAL CHAMBERS WE HAVE IN NEW YORK NOW.
I-I HAVEN'T READ IT IN A WHILE.
YOU SHOULD. LIFE'S PLEASURES, WE MUST ENJOY WHILE WE CAN.
BUT TELL ME ABOUT YOUR *NEW YORK HERALD*. IT IS THE ADVENTUROUS NEWSPAPER THAT FOUND DR. LIVINGSTONE FOR US, I BELIEVE.
DO ***YOU*** PLAN A SAFARI INTO THE DARK CONTINENT, MR. BLACK?
HA HA. NO, NOT ME. Y-YOU KNOW THE *HERALD*, THEN?

OH, YES. BEFORE MY ILLNESS, I GREATLY ADMIRED ITS OFFICES. THE STATUE OF ATHENA, THE BRASS OWLS WITH THE ELECTRIC EYES FLASHING...
"AL-HIKMAH AL-NAJMIYYA". THERE, TOO, IS WISDOM AMONG THE TWINKLING STARS, IS IT NOT?
TH-THAT'S A LOVELY THOUGHT.
SO, Y-YOUR ILLNESS COMMENCED SOME TIME AROUND 1905, IS THAT RIGHT?
WELL, TH-THAT'S NEW YORK FOR YOU. MOST PEOPLE MIND THEIR OWN B-BUSINESS.
1905, YES, WHEN DR. ESTES DIES. YOU SEE, FOR MORALITY, WE TEST OUR PROCEDURES ON OURSELVES. DR. ESTES WAS NOT LUCKY.
FOR MYSELF, I MUST NOT COMPLAIN. HERE, FOR A TIME, I CAN BE COMFORTABLE.
LIFE DOES NOT TROUBLE ME.
EXACTLY. THAT IS EXACTLY THE CASE. IN AMERICA, WE ARE ALLOWED OUR PRIVACY, YES? WE ARE ALLOWED OUR SECRETS.
I HAVE MY SECRET AND YOU HAVE YOURS, I THINK. OTHER PEOPLE, ALSO.
THERE IS A CONCEALED COUNTRY, THEREFORE, HIDDEN BELOW THE SOCIETY WE SHOW THE WORLD.
UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH, IT LURKS BEHIND OUR PRETENCES.
THIS TRUTH, IT IS A LAND SUNKEN BENEATH MANY FATHOMS.
WERE IT ONE DAY TO RISE AND CONFRONT US ALL, WHAT WOULD YOU DO, MR. BLACK?
WHAT WOULD ANY OF US DO?
317

DR. ALVAREZ, TH-THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME. Y-YOU'VE GIVEN ME A LOT TO THINK ABOUT.
B-BEFORE I GO, CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE T-TRAGEDIES SURROUNDING *SOUS LE MONDE*; THE S-SUICIDES AND SO FORTH?
OH, THAT WAS LARGELY A RUSE OF THE PUBLISHERS, I HAVE HEARD, TO MAKE THEIR BOOK A SENSATION.
R-REALLY? B-BUT DIDN'T PEOPLE LOSE THEIR MINDS?
OVER A BOOK?
NO, MR. BLACK. A WOMAN HAVING MENTAL ILLNESS, A LONG HISTORY, ENTERED AN INSTITUTION. ANOTHER MAN ENDED HIS LIFE, BUT THIS WAS AFTER BANKRUPTCY.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND? THAT THEY HAD READ *SOUS LE MONDE* WAS A COINCIDENCE FOR GUILLOT'S PUBLISHERS TO EXPLOIT.
HUH. W-WELL, I GUESS THAT SINKS MY S-STORY, BUT, STILL, I'M GLAD I CAME.
THE HIDDEN AMERICA YOU T-TALKED OF, THAT'S AN IDEA TH-THAT I'LL BE CHEWING OVER.
I AM PLEASED. AND MY WORDS ON LOVE, TOO, I HOPE.
WE MUST NEVER DISCARD THOSE WE ARE LOVED BY. LACKING THEM, WE ARE CURSED.
WITHOUT MRS. ORTEGA, FOR MY OWN EXAMPLE, I THINK THAT I SHOULD FALL IN PIECES.
GOOD EVENING TO YOU, MR. BLACK.
OUR CONVERSATION HAS BEEN A LIVELY ONE.

SEÑOR, A MOMENT PLEASE.
YOU HAVE SEEN WHAT IT IS WITH THE DOCTOR, YES? I ASK THAT IN YOUR NEWSPAPER, YOU DO NOT MAKE LIES ABOUT HIM.
TAKE IT EASY, MRS. ORTEGA. US REPORTERS PRIDE OURSELVES ON OUR ACCURACY.
THE DAY I'M KNOWINGLY DISHONEST WITH A FEATURE IS THE DAY I QUIT JOURNALISM.
GOOD. I CAN TELL, YOU ARE GOOD BOY.
AND FOR ME, DO NOT THINK TOO BAD, PLEASE. DR. ALVAREZ, HE IS THE LONELIEST PEOPLE. IN THIS WORLD, NO ONE IS LIKE HIM.
I DO FOR HIM WHAT I CAN. IT IS SORRY ABOUT HIM, HOW HE IS.
MAY GOD GO WITH YOU, SEÑOR.

...THE MATTER? WE ATTEND THE SAME CHARITY ORGANIZATION, WE EXCHANGED A FEW WORDS AND I SAID I KNEW YOU.
IT ISN'T LIKE HE KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT ME...
NO, NO, IT'S FINE. I JUST, I JUST DIDN'T REALISE THAT YOU AND EPHRAIM POSEY, YOU KNOW, ASSOCIATED WITH EACH OTHER.
REALLY, IT'S FINE.
...WANT IT TO BE LIKE THIS. I'M SORRY...
BECAUSE I MET YOUR BOSS? ROBERT, I *LOVE* YOU. DOESN'T THAT MEAN *ANYTHING?*
HOW CAN YOU BE SO *COWARDLY?* YOU HIDE YOUR *RELIGION*, YOU HIDE THE TRUTH ABOUT *US*...
YOU COVER YOUR FEELINGS, IT'S LIKE YOU DON'T *HAVE* ANY. YOU'RE *COLD*, ROBERT. YOU'RE REALLY COLD.

THE NEW YORK HERALD
HERALD ADVERTISEMENTS RECEIVED AT THIS WINDOW
HERALD

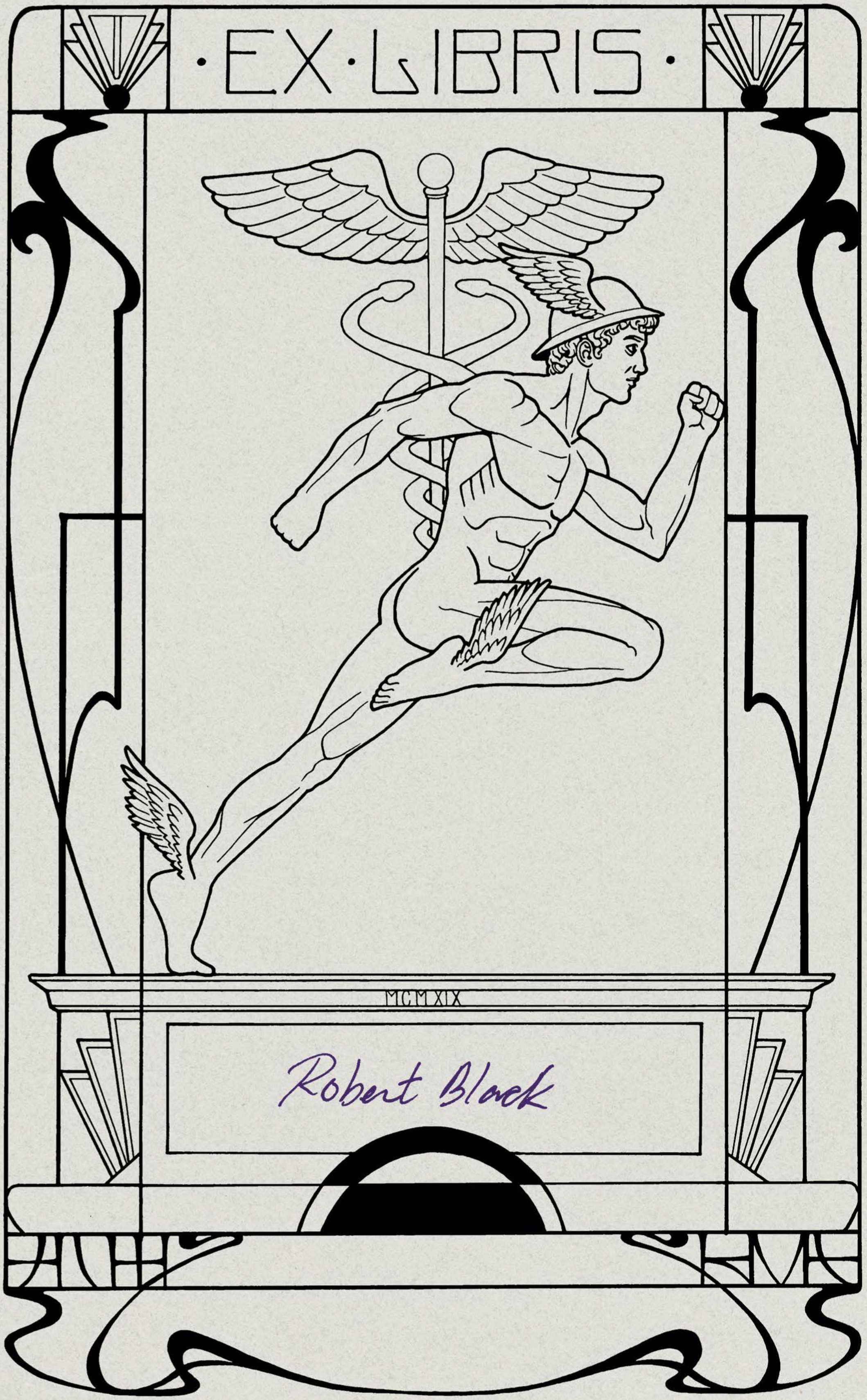
...LIKE THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT DOING?
TRUST ME, MR. DIX, THAT'LL NEVER HAPPEN. IT'S JUST A SOP THEY'RE THROWING TO THESE WOMEN WHO WANT TO VOTE.
EVEN IF THEY PASS THE LEGISLATION, IT WON'T BE ENFORCED. DARN NEAR EVERY SENATOR I KNOW IS ON THE SAUCE.
IN FACT, I'D GO SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT THIS TIME NEXT YEAR, THE WHOLE AFFAIR WILL...
AH. MR. BLACK. SO YOU'RE BACK FROM THE BOWERY. I TAKE IT YOU MANAGED TO TRACK DOWN THAT SPANISH DOCTOR OF YOURS?
BOBBY, YOU'VE BEEN GONE ALL *AFTERNOON.* WHAT, WERE YOU OUT WITH SOME WOMAN?
HA HA. NO, CHANCE WOULD BE A FINE THING.
I WAS WITH DR. ALVAREZ IN HIS ROOMS. YOU KNOW, HE HAS THIS DISEASE, SO THAT HE HAS TO STAY COLD ALL THE TIME?
HE'S CERTAINLY AN INTERESTING FELLOW, I'LL GIVE HIM THAT. HE REALLY KNOWS HIS LITERATURE...
WHAT ABOUT THAT FRENCH BOOK YOU MENTIONED?
SOUS LE MONDE. YES, HE KNEW PLENTY, BUT I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH I CAN USE.
MAYBE CONCEN-TRATING ON ALVAREZ HIMSELF WOULD BE BETTER. YOU SHOULD SEE THIS AMMONIA COOLING SYSTEM HE HAS...
OH, WE NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT HALF PAGE ANYMORE. WE GOT A STORY IN AND I FILLED IT ALREADY.

OH. WELL, ACTUALLY, THAT'S A RELIEF. SO, WHAT DID YOU USE TO PLUG THE GAP IN THE END?
OH, SOME POOR SAP ENDED IT ALL AT THE EXIT GARDEN IN BRYANT PARK.
PRISSY, I CAN'T FIND THAT BIOGRAPHY FILE...
WELL, IT'S IN THE RIGHT *PLACE*, SO YOU CAN'T BE *LOOKING* PROPERLY.
OH, NOW YOU'RE JUST MESSING THEM ALL UP. HERE, LET ME...
OH, IT ISN'T URGENT, MISS TURNER. IT'S JUST TO CHECK THE DETAILS IN MR. DIX'S PIECE. I WOULDN'T TROUBLE YOUR PRETTY LITTLE HEAD OVER IT.
YOU KNOW, IT'S FUNNY. DR. ALVAREZ, JUST TODAY, HE MENTIONED THE EXIT GARDENS.
HE SAID ROBERT CHAMBERS HAD PREDICTED THEM IN THE *KING IN YELLOW*. IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I READ IT, I'D FORGOTTEN THAT.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST SEND A REQUEST BY TUBE TO THE MAIN OFFICE?
WELL, IT *SHOULD* BE RIGHT HERE, UNDER B FOR BRUSSELL...
BRUSSELL? YOU DUMMY, HIS NAME WAS ***RUSSELL***.
GOOD GOSH, THAT'S RIGHT. I'D FORGOTTEN. YOU'D MET HIM TOO, MR. BLACK, DIDN'T I HEAR?
JONATHAN RUSSELL, THE SUCCESSFUL YOUNG LAWYER FELLER? I THOUGHT I REMEMBERED HIM SAYING HE KNEW YOU.
OH. OH, YEAH. YOU'RE RIGHT. HERE IT IS UNDER R...
YOU KNOW, MAYBE IF THEY BRING IN PROHIBITION, YOUR MEMORY WILL GET BETTER.

I... I-I KNOW HIM A LITTLE, SURE.
WHAT BEATS ME IS WHY A GET-AHEAD YOUNG CHARACTER LIKE RUSSELL SHOULD CHOOSE TO TAKE THAT WAY OUT.
HE WAS DOING WELL, HE DIDN'T HAVE WOMAN PROBLEMS BY ALL ACCOUNTS, HE WAS GETTING KNOWN AROUND TOWN...
PRISSY, THAT'S MEAN. I DRINK A LITTLE. WHO DOESN'T?
FREDDY DIX, YOU THINK PEOPLE DON'T SEE THAT LITTLE HIP FLASK OF YOURS. WELL, THEY DO.
YOU KNOW, IF YOU GALS GET THE VOTE I SWEAR I'M LEAVING THE COUNTRY.
I SUPPOSE IF WE DIG AROUND WE MIGHT FIND SOME MOTIVE.
HOW ABOUT YOU, MR. BLACK? ANY IDEAS WHY RUSSELL SHOULD KILL HIMSELF?
I...
UH...
I-I KNOW THAT HE'D READ *SOUS LE MONDE*...
I KNEW IT! DIDN'T I SAY? IT'S JUST LIKE IN *THE YELLOW THING*.
BOY, WHAT A GODSEND. I CAN WORK THAT RIGHT INTO THE COPY I DID...
WELL, WELL! IT LOOKS LIKE THERE IS SOMEONE WATCHING OUT FOR US, AFTER ALL.
EVEN IN A TOWN LIKE THIS, THERE IS SOMETIMES GREAT MERCY.

Providence

Commmplace Book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MCMXIX
Robert Black

June 5th, 1919

~~I don't know how to~~

~~I never thought that this~~

Today my lover took their own life at the Exit Garden down in Bryant Park, because I'd ended our affair. It's taken me two hours to write that sentence, and what now?

Well, now I'm drunk. I can't believe the day that I've just had. I can't believe that Lily's gone. Of course, I can't go to the funeral. The way I feel, I don't know if I can even keep working at the Herald any more. All this is thundering around inside me now, and two floors down ~~outside~~ outside my open window on the street below Times Square is full of squeals and streetcars as if nothing's happened. And it's not just Lily. I met somebody today, a doctor. living down on W. 14TH st. He's the same Dr. Alvarez who wrote the critique of Guillot's Sous le Monde that Lily introduced me to. Alvarez has some kind of medical complaint which means he has to keep the temperature near freezing but the things he said! About life and love and a whole hidden America made up of people's secret lives. And I'm damned if that's not the truest thing I ever heard. It's true for me and it was true for Lily. Oh, God, Lily's dead. I'm never going to stroke that hair again. I'm never going to cup that chin. This isn't making any sense and I keep crying. I'll try again. I'll try again soon.

It's an hour since I penned the above and I think that I'm feeling slightly better, or, if not exactly better, that I at least have myself under some puny measure of control. What I should do, I realise, is to put this all down in some sort of order if I'm ever to make sense of it. The first thing is this book itself, which Lily gave me as a present a few weeks ago after I'd been delivering my usual speech about how one day I was going to quit my job and try my hand at being a real writer. Naturally, I didn't have the first idea what it was for, but then I had it patiently explained to me that this was something called a commonplace book, and that a great many serious writers kept them, even towering eminences like the great Jack London. It's apparently a volume in which one can jot down fragments or ideas, characters' names, or dreams, or lines of dialogue one may have overheard that might be useful in some future

literary endeavour. It's only just struck me that I'm making my first entry in the book my sweetheart gave me, and I'm writing to record their suicide, the only person who ever believed in me. I can't go to the funeral. I can't.

Anyway, that's enough of that. Today began with one of those blue skies that seems so perfect it can only go on to betray you horribly. I got into the office to find Ephraim Posey pacing up and down because Our Lords & Masters had decided that they wanted the Versailles piece for tomorrow rather than next week, so I sat down and got right on with it. I didn't do too miserable a job, though I say so myself (intolerable burden upon Germany's economy & likelihood of recreating the conditions in which further conflict is inevitable, etc, etc.) and got the dreary business over with by early afternoon by which time Posey was in fresh conniptions due to a half-page advertisement being withdrawn some few hours after the last minute. Everyone was desperately trying to come up with something that might fill the space, and hopeless little Freddy Dix suggested we do something on the Jersey Devil, even though all of that foolery was no more than ten years ago and we'd be just as well-off in rehashing the Titanic. Anyway, by this point Prissy Turner, who'd been making googy eyes at me all morning, started squeaking in her usual empty-headed fashion about Chambers' King in Yellow (she called it "the Yellow Thing"), which she'd got mixed up with Claude Guillot's Sous le Monde; all this after I happened to have casually mentioned both books to her some time back in Spring while she was standing picking pieces of imaginary lint off of my shoulder and pretending she was listening to what I was saying. Trying to correct her, and I really don't know why I bothered, maybe I was trying to show off in front of Posey, but I mentioned Dr. Alvarez's essay about Sous le Monde and next thing that I know I'm down on W. 14th St., which is obviously a part of town that I'm not unfamiliar with. The gay girls down there weighed me up with practiced gazes and dismissed me as at best a bad investment and at worst as competition. I think one or two of them I recognised.

When I reached Alvarez's rooming house, one of those looming brownstones that they [redacted] favour in those parts, the door was answered at great length by Alvarez's landlady, an older Spanish woman named Ortega who I swear was wearing a moth-eaten old fur coat with not a stitch on underneath it. When she showed me in and led me upstairs to the doctor's room, it wasn't long before I had it all worked out, she and the doc had been in his room having

fun when I came banging at the door and interupted their good time. Since as I've pointed out already Dr. Alvarez's rooms are chilled by one of those up-to-the-minute cooling systems you can get now which run on ammonia, it wasn't difficult to figure out why the landlady needed her fur coat.

Alvarez is the most extraordinary man. His manner when he sits and talks with you is very still, without a wasted gesture. He's so burdened by his illness, with his skin a pale, unhealthy gray which almost seemed green in the artificial light, that I kept thinking that he'd passed away while I was talking to him and was only reassured when he next spoke to me. With my excitable [redacted] imagination and his deathly pauses it was almost as if I was in the company of Poe's M. Valdemar, perhaps sustained by the frostbite-inducing temperature rather than by the means of mesmerism. but I mention that only as an example of the over-fanciful and agitated state that I was in. In fact, I even went so far as to concoct a lurid and fantastical tale in my head concerning the doctor's relationship with his landlady, starting from my Poe-like premise, which I would guess counts as an idea for a story and perhaps excuses me for using this new commonplace book as a kind of unofficial diary. But the most affecting thing about the doctor wasn't how he looked or acted half so much as what he said.

It was as if his illness, whatever it is, allows him a perspective that's outside of everything. He seemed to me like somebody who saw things very clearly, as when he mentioned a tale in Chambers' King in Yellow that apparently predicts a just-concluded war with Germany for the America of 1920 in a story written nearly thirty years before that date, which I confess I hadn't noticed. Dr. Alvarez seemed so perceptive, there were even moments when I would have sworn that he somehow knew everything about me; things he couldn't possibly have known from looking at me. He told me he had a secret, maybe the affair with old Mrs. Ortega, and he somehow knew I had a secret, too. He talked a little about Sous le Monde and said that he'd been mainly interested in its references to an old Arab book on alchemy, which, if I read my notes correctly, is called 'Kitab al Hikmah al Najmiyya' or 'Book of the Wisdom of the Stars' by somebody named Khalid Yazid in the eighth century AD. He said that it contained a mix of early science and occultism with four methods for extending life or even for reviving one already dead, and that a Flatbush man named Robert Suydam had supplied him and his late companion Dr.

Estes with a transcript of a copy that apparently exists here in America. When Alvarez spoke of a buried or concealed America composed of everybody's secret lives, I could imagine a whole hidden world of individuals trading occult or exotic science lore and information, a society of characters as striking as Alvarez that conducts itself unseen below the daily fabric of America.

It is, I'm sure, entirely a romantic notion from somebody who knows very little of the world beyond Milwaukee and New York, but what if it or something like it were indeed the case? Wouldn't that provide me with the perfect fancy metaphor for what I really want to talk about? I don't think that this country's ready for a book about the hidden world that people like me and my friends inhabit, but if I could write instead about a different network of outsiders who remain invisible to regular society, with their own private practices and way of talking, almost their own language, then I could make many of the points, say many of the things I want to say without upsetting any apple-carts. When I left Dr. Alvarez's place I was already thinking about maybe tracking down this Mr. Suydam to see whether he could give me any further leads on the material or the kind of people that I'm looking for, perhaps some details on the whereabouts of this mysterious Arab tome that's still supposedly at large somewhere here in America.

So much of this is made of books, this commonplace book Lily got for me; the Arab work; the myths and rumours around Guillot's Sous le Monde that Alvarez assured me were inventions of the publisher; The King in Yellow with its premonitions of a war between America and Germany concluded some time before 1920, and of course in the same story Chambers talks about his "lethal chambers" being raised in New York's public parks. I've been writing all this so I don't have to think about Lily but that was all books as well, the reason we were both attracted to each other. Oh God, I've just thought this moment, all those visits to the library we made together, and we'd walk back through the park there, by that little stream that they put in that's fed from the old reservoir before the library was there. Our lives, the world, it's all just lies, it's all a story that we're making up until a more compelling story comes along.

~~My Lily's dead, because I am a coward and because I keep pretending. I'm not any kind of writer.~~ Enough. Enough of this. I'm going to bed, to sleep. I never want to dream again.

CHAPTER 2

"An ancient Dutch cemetery in Flatbush, where mouldering gravestones bearing early eighteenth-century inscriptions might still be seen, was frequently visited. Lovecraft was delighted with the 'Hier Lydt' or 'Hier leght begraaven' still plainly discernible on the pieces of scaling red slate."

–Rheinhart Kleiner,
"Bards and Bibliophiles",
Aonian 2, No. 4
(Winter 1944)

...SUDDEN, BOBBY. IS IT BECAUSE OF THAT *MAN*, THE ONE WHO KILLED HIMSELF?
HM? OH, NO. NO, I HARDLY KNEW HIM.
THIS IS JUST SOMETHING I HAVE TO GET OUT OF MY SYSTEM. I'LL BE BACK IN A WEEK, PRISSY, I PROMISE.
I'M SURE MY BEST GIRL CAN HANDLE THINGS UNTIL THEN.
...SO UNDERSTANDING, MR. POSEY. I'M FOLLOWING UP SOMETHING *DR. ALVAREZ* SAID, ABOUT AN IMPORTER LIVING IN *FLATBUSH*...
HUH. NO DOUBT CONNECTED WITH THAT *BOOK* YOU'VE BEEN THREATENING TO WRITE.
WELL, GOOD LUCK, MR. BLACK... AND DON'T BE GONE *TOO* LONG.
INCIDENTALLY, THE *HERALD* HAS A POLICE CONTACT IN BROOKLYN, A DETECTIVE *MALONE*...

WELL, GOOD DAY TO YOU, NOW.
I'M THINKING YOU'LL BE MR. BLACK OF THE *HERALD*, WHO WRITES SUCH AN ELOQUENT ***LETTER***.
I'M TOM MALONE.
II: THE HOOK

YOU'RE DETECTIVE MALONE? I-I'M SORRY. I SUPPOSE I'D IMAGINED SOMEONE OLDER.
I'M ROBERT BLACK. I'M, UH, I'M GLAD YOU LIKED MY LETTER. THANKS FOR...
OH, IT'S MY PLEASURE. YOUR MESSAGE MENTIONED GUILLOT AND CHAMBERS, SO YOU'RE A FELLOW AFTER MY OWN HEART.
NO DOUBT YOU'VE WONDERED WHY WE'RE MEETING HERE IN RED HOOK?
WELL, YES. I HEARD THAT THIS MR. SUYDAM LIVED IN FLATBUSH, SO...
HAVE YOU REALLY READ CHAMBERS AND GUILLOT?
HAHA. I MAY BE A BIG IRISH COPPER, MR. BLACK, BUT I'VE THE SOUL OF A ROMANTIC POET.
AND WHILE SUYDAM'S RESIDENCE IS IN FLATBUSH, I WANTED YOU TO SEE HIS PLACE OF WORK...
WHAT, YOU MEAN THE BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET?
I HADN'T THOUGHT OF THIS SUYDAM AS A RELIGIOUS MAN. ISN'T THAT A CHURCH?
AH, IT USED TO BE. IT'S MOSTLY A DANCEHALL NOW, FULL TO BURSTING WITH BANDIDOS OF A FRIDAY NIGHT.
YOU MIGHT HAVE NOTICED THAT WE HARBOUR A VARIETY OF NATIONALITIES.
I DON'T IMAGINE ELLIS ISLAND WILL BE TURNING OFF THE FAUCET ANY TIME SOON.
WHAT ARE THEY, ANYWAY? HISPANICS, OR... ?
OH, THERE'S ALL SORTS. ASIATICS, MORE THAN A FEW KURDS FROM TURKEY WAY...
THEY'RE THE LADS YOU'LL FIND ATTENDING SUYDAM'S LECTURES IN OCCULT PHILOSOPHY, DOWN IN THE CELLARS UNDERNEATH THE CHURCH.

LECTURES?
SUPPOSEDLY... THOUGH FROM THE NOISE THEY MAKE YOU'D THINK IT WAS A WITCHES' *COVEN*, OR AN *ORGY*.
IT'S A PLACE THAT'S NOT WELL-LIKED. ON THE OCCASION THAT WE'VE HAD A CHILD GO MISSING, YOU HEAR *RUMOURS*.
I JUST THOUGHT I'D SHOW IT TO YOU. WE CAN HEAD OVER TO FLATBUSH NOW.
SURE.
SO, IS EVERYONE AT THE BUTLER STREET STATION AS WELL-READ AS YOU ARE, DETECTIVE MALONE?
CALL ME TOM. IT'S TRUE I'VE STUDIED A FEW BOOKS, THOUGH MOSTLY OF THE MYSTICAL OR THE MYSTERIOUS KIND.
YOU'LL LAUGH, BUT I'D IMAGINED THAT POLICING RED HOOK MIGHT AFFORD ME MANY GLAMOROUS, EXOTIC *EXPLOITS*.
IT'S THE RISK YOU RUN, IF YOU'RE A *DREAMER*. FACT AND FANCY GET MIXED UP, AND DREAMS CAN COME TO RULE YOUR WAKING *CIRCUMSTANCES*.
IN PLAIN TRUTH, RED HOOK'S A HEAVING SLUM, WITH NOTHING EXTRAORDINARY ABOUT IT.
WHAT, NO BLOODY *MURDERS?* I'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT WITH THAT GRUESOME-SOUNDING *NAME*...
RED HOOK? THAT'S FROM THE DUTCH *HOEK*, MEANING A POINT OF LAND.
NATURALLY, BROOKLYN'S SEEN BIG MURDERS, BUT THOSE WERE A WHILE BACK.
THE CIGAR GIRL, MARY ROGERS, WASHED UP STRANGLED IN HOBOKEN. 1837, THEREABOUTS. YOUR *HERALD* COVERED IT, WHILE MR. POE BASED 'MARIE ROGET' ON THE INCIDENT...
WHAT, THE DUPIN STORY?

THE VERY SAME. ONE OF POE'S GREATEST TRICKS, I THINK, WAS HOW HE COMBINED FICTION WITH REALITY.
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU CAN DO THAT WITH *JOURNALISM*.
OH, YOU'D BE SURPRISED.
ACTUALLY, I'M NOT HERE AS A JOURNALIST TODAY. THIS IS MORE OF A *PERSONAL* UNDERTAKING, RESEARCHING A *BOOK* I'M THINKING ABOUT WRITING.
A BOOK! WELL, YOU'VE IMPRESSED ME, MR. BLACK!
PLEASE, IT'S ROBERT.
DON'T BE *TOO* IMPRESSED. IT'S BARELY AN IDEA AS YET. I MET A DOCTOR WHO'D OBTAINED A COPIED ARAB OCCULT TEXT THROUGH SUYDAM.
THE ORIGINAL IS SOMEWHERE IN THIS COUNTRY, REPORTEDLY. I THOUGHT THE IDEA OF ALCHEMISTS IN MODERN AMERICA SOUNDED *INTERESTING*...
I'LL SAY! WHY, I'D LIKE TO READ SUCH A WORK MYSELF.
AND I APPRECIATE HOW ROBERT SUYDAM WOULD BE USEFUL. HE PROFESSES TO KNOW ALL ABOUT SUCH THINGS.
INCIDENTALLY, THE ROOKERY ACROSS THE WAY WITH ALL THE SWARTHY LOAFERS IS KNOWN LOCALLY AS *PARKER PLACE*.
SUYDAM KEEPS A BASEMENT FLAT THERE, I'M INFORMED.
HM. CHURCH CELLARS AND A BASEMENT *FLAT*. HE SEEMS TO LIKE IT *UNDERGROUND*.
IS IT SOME *IMMIGRATION* RACKET, DO YOU THINK?
OH, I SUSPECT THAT'S PART OF IT, ALTHOUGH IT BEATS ME HOW IT'S DONE.
SPEAKING OF SUBTERRANEOUS SPACES, HAVE YOU COME ACROSS PROFESSOR JUNG'S THOUGHTS ON THE MATTER? IT'S *PSYCHOLOGY*, APPARENTLY.

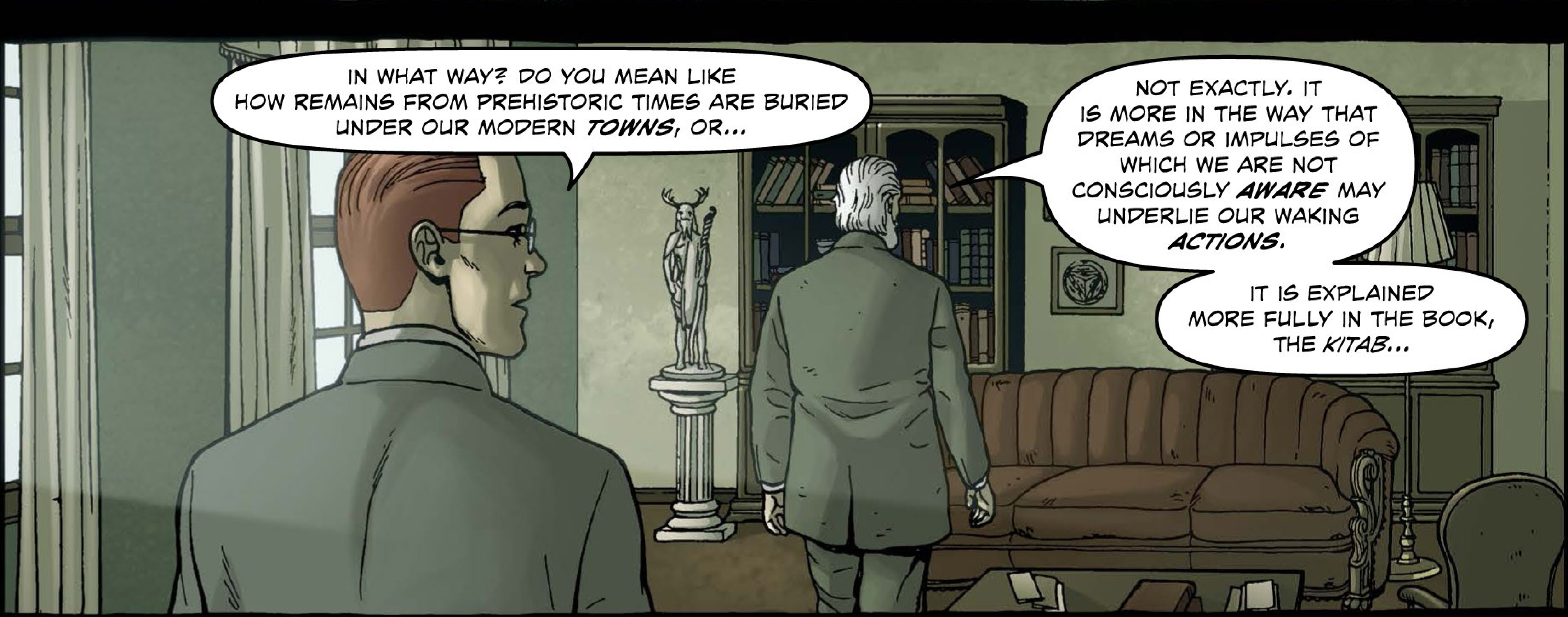
OH, YOU MEAN HIS BOOK ON DREAMS, CAME OUT A YEAR OR TWO AGO? TOM, YOU REALLY ARE FULL OF SURPRISES...
AREN'T WE ALL?
NO, YOUR PROFESSOR JUNG WOULD HAVE IT THAT CAVES, CELLARS AND SUCH CORRESPOND TO OUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND.
IS THERE MUCH IN THAT, WOULD YOU SAY, OR IS IT HOKUM?
WELL, IF DREAMS ARE PARTS OF US THAT WE'VE HIDDEN AWAY OR BURIED, I GUESS IT MAKES SENSE.
SAY, ARE WE STILL IN RED HOOK? THIS PLACE SEEMS A LITTLE MORE SEDATE...
RED HOOK, SOUTH BROOKLYN, IT DEPENDS ON WHO YOU ASK.
OFFICIALLY WE'RE ON THE EDGE OF FLATBUSH. SUYDAM LIVES NEARBY.
THIS HERE'S THE DUTCH REFORM CHURCH WHERE HE OFTEN TAKES THE AIR.
THERE'S AN ESTABLISHMENT ACROSS THE STREET PROVIDING COFFEE THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU'D CALL UNSPEAKABLE.
I FANCIED WE MIGHT SIT IN WATCH FOR HIM, IF YOU'D A MIND TO KEEP A SIMPLE FLATFOOT COMPANY?
UH... YES. YES, I'D LIKE THAT VERY MUCH.

...AND SO SINCE MY, MY FRIEND PASSED AWAY, I'VE WANTED TO LEAVE NEW YORK.
I'VE MONEY SAVED. IF THIS SUYDAM LEAD CAPTURES MY IMAGINATION, I MIGHT NEVER GO BACK TO THE HERALD.
THAT'S TERRIBLE, ABOUT YOUR FRIEND. I'M VERY SORRY.
LOOK, HERE'S MY ADDRESS. IF YOU DO LEAVE TOWN, PLEASE WRITE TO ME.
THAT WOULD BE SWELL. OF COURSE I WILL. I'LL... UH...
I MEAN IT, ROBERT. YOU'RE A KNOWLEDGEABLE MAN, AND I'VE ENJOYED OUR CONVERSATION.
SEND ME YOUR BOOK WHEN IT'S DONE. IT SOUNDS MARVELLOUS.
AND IF YOU SHOULD DECIDE NOT TO LEAVE AFTER ALL, I HOPE YOU'LL COME AND SEE ME, WON'T YOU?
YOU CAN DEPEND UPON IT. I'VE ENJOYED OUR CONVERSATION TOO.
TOM, LOOK, I... I'VE BEEN WANTING TO ASK IF YOU MIGHT BE...
AH, DAMN IT ALL. THERE'S SUYDAM NOW. WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT?
YOU'D BETTER BE ON YOUR WAY. GOOD LUCK WITH FINDING WHAT YOU NEED. I'LL LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AGAIN.

UM...
MR. *SUYDAM?*
I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU...
YES, I AM ROBERT SUYDAM. HOW CAN I HELP YOU, YOUNG MAN?
Hier leyt het lighaam van SEYTIE SUYDAM huys vrow van de overleeden Evert Hegeman overleeden den 11 July 1802 oudt 76 jaaren 9 maanden en 13 dagen
MY NAME'S ROBERT BLACK. I... I SUPPOSE I'M AN OCCULT SCHOLAR, LIKE YOURSELF. A CUSTOMER OF YOURS, DR. ALVAREZ, RECOMMENDED I...
OH.
OH, I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT YOUR VISIT. WAS THAT PERSON PART OF YOUR FAMILY?
HA! WHO KNOWS? I LIKE TO THINK THEY MAY HAVE BEEN.
BUT, PLEASE, IF YOU ARE A PROSPECTIVE CUSTOMER YOURSELF, THEN WE SHOULD NOT BE STANDING HERE. MY HOME, WITH ALL ITS WARES, AWAITS US.
REALLY? UH, WELL, THAT WOULD BE JUST GREAT.
DR. ALVAREZ SAYS YOU LOCATED A RARE *TEXT* FOR HIM...

ALVAREZ... THIS WAS FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, YES? WITH A PARTNER, ANOTHER DOCTOR. ESTEVEZ, ESTES, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
I REMEMBER, THEY NEEDED AN ALCHEMICAL DOCUMENT...
THAT'S RIGHT. THE KITAB AL-HIKMAH AL-NAJMIYYA, IF THAT'S HOW YOU PRONOUNCE IT. YOU LOCATED A COPY HERE IN THE U.S.
PER-REN TAWSI! PER-REN MEN YEN JWAN BEKIRIN!
PER-REN JWAN YEN MELEK TAUS, KOO SLAV LESSAR JHANI WEEBUN...
YES. YES, A TRANSCRIPT FROM THE VOLUME THAT EXISTS IN NEW ENGLAND, I RECALL.
I OBTAINED IT THROUGH MY SUPPLIERS IN SALEM. APPARENTLY THERE IS A BROTHERHOOD DEVOTED TO THE BOOK IN THEIR PART OF THE COUNTRY.
THERE! THE RIGHT KEY AT LAST...
BOY...
BOY, THIS IS SOME PLACE YOU HAVE HERE, MR. SUYDAM.
SAY, THAT FOREIGN MAN OUTSIDE. WAS HE SELLING...?
PEACOCK FEATHERS. HE IS FROM THE KURDISH TERRITORIES, WHERE THEY WORSHIP A PEACOCK ANGEL AND SUCH THINGS HAVE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE. PLEASE, COME THIS WAY...
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW MOHAMMEDAN PEOPLE BELIEVED IN ANGELS.
Y'KNOW, I WISH I HAD THIS MUCH SPACE IN MY APARTMENT. IT, UH, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU EVEN HAVE A BASEMENT...
YES. IT IS UNUSABLE AT PRESENT. WE HAVE A GAS LEAK.
AND THE YEZIDIS' PEACOCK ANGEL IS REBELLIOUS, MUCH LIKE THE CHRISTIAN SATAN.

UH-HUH. SO THESE... YEZIDIS, DID YOU SAY? THESE YEZIDIS ARE WHAT YOU'D CALL DEVIL-WORSHIPPERS, I GUESS.
HOW ABOUT THIS NEW ENGLAND BROTHERHOOD YOU MENTIONED? DOES THAT STUFF STILL GO ON IN AMERICA TODAY? I MEAN, I KNOW SALEM HAD WITCH TRIALS...
WELL, YOU KNOW, DEVIL WORSHIP, IT IS A CRUDE DESCRIPTION. THE YEZIDIS' DEVIL, LIKE THE GNOSTICS', REPRESENTS ONLY THE TYRANNY OF THE MATERIAL WORLD.
MY CONTACTS IN SALEM AND THEIR ASSOCIATES, BY CONTRAST, SEEM INTRIGUED BY A VERY DIFFERENT WORLD THAT MAY PRECEDE OR EVEN UNDERLIE OUR OWN.


IN WHAT WAY? DO YOU MEAN LIKE HOW REMAINS FROM PREHISTORIC TIMES ARE BURIED UNDER OUR MODERN TOWNS, OR...
NOT EXACTLY. IT IS MORE IN THE WAY THAT DREAMS OR IMPULSES OF WHICH WE ARE NOT CONSCIOUSLY AWARE MAY UNDERLIE OUR WAKING ACTIONS.
IT IS EXPLAINED MORE FULLY IN THE BOOK, THE KITAB...

TO BE HONEST, THAT'S WHAT I'M MOST INTERESTED IN. I KNOW IT MEANS 'BOOK OF THE WISDOM OF THE STARS'...
YES. IT WAS WRITTEN BY KHĀLID IBN YAZĪD, WHO DIED IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY, AND LATER REVISED BY THE ALCHEMIST AL BUNI.
IT IS CONSIDERED HERETICAL AMONGST MOST ARAB PEOPLES.
PLEASE, SIT DOWN.
KHĀLID IBN YAZĪD WAS SON TO A CALIPH. HE INTRODUCED COINS TO THE MOHAMMEDAN WORLD, AND GUNPOWDER MAYBE.
HE DIED IN 704, BUT ACCOUNTS VARY. IN ONE, HE IS TORN APART BY INVISIBLE DJINNS... OR, MORE CREDIBLY, DISMEMBERED BY A WHIRLWIND.
SOMETIMES HE WAS CALLED CALID, OR HALI...
HALI? THAT SOUNDS FAMILIAR...
HM. FROM YOUR READINGS, PERHAPS? KHALID'S UNUSUAL BOOK WAS FIRST TRANSLATED TO LATIN AT TOLEDO IN MOORISH SPAIN.
OFTEN SUPPRESSED, IT IS LITTLE KNOWN, EVEN IN OCCULT CIRCLES. I WAS SURPRISED WHEN DR. ALVAREZ ENQUIRED ABOUT IT.
UH, HE SAID IT CONTAINED MATERIAL RELEVANT TO HIS WORK, ABOUT PROLONGING LIFE AND AVOIDING DEATH...
AH, YES. THE FOUR METHODS. THE FIRST CONCERNS DIET; THE SECOND TEMPERATURE. NEXT IS THE TRANSFERENCE OF SOULS, AND FINALLY A REVITALISING OF THE CADAVER.
THIS LAST TECHNIQUE PARTICULARLY INTRIGUES ME...
WELL, UH, I CAN SEE WHY THE BOOK MIGHT WIND UP GETTING SUPPRESSED. HOW DID A COPY REACH THE UNITED STATES?

THAT RELATES TO THE BROTHERHOOD I SPOKE OF. I CAN SHOW YOU MY PAMPHLET CONCERNING THEM, IF YOU LIKE.
THE ORDER'S FOUNDER, FRENCHMAN ETIENNE ROULET, ARRIVED IN GREENWICH, RHODE ISLAND, IN 1686, BRINGING KHĀLID'S BOOK WITH HIM.
HE SOON ENCOUNTERED OTHER OCCULTISTS...
YOU MEAN THERE WERE GENUINE WITCHES IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY NEW ENGLAND?
OH, CERTAINLY. ROULET'S FIRST ASSOCIATE WAS JUST SUCH A WOMAN, ONE HEKEZIAH MASSEY, FROM NEARBY MANCHESTER.
THEN THERE WAS JAPHETH COLWEN, A PRACTITIONER FROM SALEM. AFTER MASSEY DISAPPEARED IN 1692, BOTH COLWEN AND ROULET MOVED ELSEWHERE IN RHODE ISLAND.
THESE THREE FOUNDED THE ORDER, THE STELLA SAPIENTE.
"WISDOM OF THE STARS" IN GREEK?
IN LATIN. MY KNOWLEDGE OF THE ORDER COMES FROM MY SALEM SUPPLIERS, THE BOGGS GOLD REFINERY.
FOR FORTY YEARS THEIR SALESMEN HAVE BROUGHT ME... WELL, FOLK ARTEFACTS, I SUPPOSE. I STILL REMEMBER THEIR FIRST REPRESENTATIVE, A FUNNY LITTLE ENGLISHMAN.
HERE. REGRETTABLY, PRODUCTION COSTS MEAN I MUST CHARGE ONE DOLLAR.
UM... SURE. THANKS.
THIS LOOKS FASCINATING.
ON ANOTHER TOPIC, I WONDERED IF YOU HAD ANYTHING RELATING TO KABBALAH. WHEN I WAS SMALL, MY GRANDFATHER, HE HAD GREAT RESPECT FOR IT...
RIGHTLY SO. ITS MYSTERIES ARE INEXHAUSTIBLE.
PRESENTLY, I AM INVESTIGATING KABBALAH'S ADVERSE ASPECT, THE QLIPHOTH, HOME OF SUCH EMINENCES AS THE DEMONS LILITH AND ASMODAY...

LILITH... ISN'T THAT NAME IN THE BIBLE?
IN SOME TRANSLATIONS, YES. ACCORDING TO KABBALAH SHE RULES THE ADVERSE ASPECTS OF BOTH THE MATERIAL REALM AND THE REALM OF DREAMS.
OLDER KABBALISTIC TRADITIONS, AFTER ALL, INSIST THAT DREAM AND REALITY ARE PART OF THE SAME SPHERE.
THIS IS COVERED IN ANOTHER OF MY PAMPHLETS...
HERE WE ARE. 'KABBALAH AND THE FAUST LEGEND', IN WHICH I CONNECT FAUST WITH THE BIBLICAL SIMON MAGUS. IT IS ANOTHER DOLLAR, I'M AFRAID.
NO, NO, THAT'S VERY REASONABLE. I... UH...
REVEREND MASTER? MORE UNRIPE FRUIT HAS ARRIVED IN PARKER PL...
OH. I-I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T REALISE THAT YOU WERE ENTERTAINING COMPANY...
OH, DO NOT WORRY. NO HARM IS DONE. MR. BLACK IS SIMPLY ONE OF MY CUSTOMERS.
MR. BLACK, PLEASE MEET MISS CORNELIA GERRITSEN. SHE ATTENDS MY OCCULT STUDIES CLASS.
WHY, THANK YOU. I HOPE I HAVEN'T INTERRUPTED YOU?
I-IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, MISS GERRITSEN. I'VE SEEN YOU IN THE SOCIETY PAGES...
NOT AT ALL. OUR BUSINESS WAS ALMOST CONCLUDED, I THINK.
MR. BLACK, FORGIVE ME. APPARENTLY THERE IS, AH, MERCHANDISE FOR MY INSPECTION NEARBY. I MUST HURRY.
IF THERE ARE OTHER PAMPHLETS YOU WISH TO PERUSE OR PURCHASE, YOU MAY LEAVE THE MONEY AND LET YOURSELF OUT.
WELL... IF YOU'RE SURE. THANK YOU.

SO, THIS FRUIT: WHERE IS IT FROM, AND OF WHAT AGE?
IT... IT LOOKS TO BE NORWEGIAN.
PERHAPS FIVE, OR SIX. I COULDN'T TELL...

ELOHIM
IHVH

HOLY...

OH.
OH, JESUS.

NO.
NO, THIS ISN'T...
NO.

HOO
HOO HOO
HOO HOO HOO

HOO HOO
HOO HOO
HOO HOO
HOOHOOHOO
HOO
OH,
GOD...
OH
GOD!

HOO
HOO
OH, NO. OH, PLEASE...
HOOHOOHOO
HOOHOOHOOHOO
NNN...

AHUHHH
AHUHHH
AHUHHH
AHUHHH
HOOHOOHOO
HOOHOOHOO HOOHOO
AHUHHH
PLEASE DON'T. PLEASE DON'T DO THIS...

HOO
PLEASE DON'T! PLEASE DON'T DAAAAA...
HOOHOOHOO
...UKK...

...BLACK?
MR. BLACK, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
HIS EYES ARE MOVING...
YOU ARE AWAKE. THANK THE HEAVENS YOU ARE NOT HARMED.
WH...? WHERE...?
YOU'RE IN MR. SUYDAM'S CELLAR.
DIDN'T HE WARN YOU ABOUT THE GAS LEAK?
OF COURSE I DID. MR. BLACK, WHAT WERE YOU *DOING* DOWN HERE?
I... UH... I-I THOUGHT I...
THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING. I-I'M SORRY...
YOU MUST HAVE BEEN OVERCOME BY THE *FUMES*. FROM THE *CRIES* YOU WERE MAKING, IT SOUNDED AS THOUGH YOU WERE HAVING A *NIGHTMARE*.
NIGHT...? OF *COURSE*. OF COURSE THAT'S WHAT IT WAS. I...
I WAS IN A FANTASTIC *CAVE* WITH... WITH A UNDERGROUND *OCEAN*, I THINK. AND, AND THERE WAS THE DEMON YOU MENTIONED. THERE WAS *LILITH*...
AH, THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND. IT PLAYS TRICKS ON US.
WE'D BEST GET YOU OUT INTO THE FRESH *AIR*.

YES. YES, OF COURSE.
Y-YOU KNOW, IT'S THE STRANGEST THING. I WAS TALKING EARLIER WITH SOMEONE, ABOUT PROFESSOR JUNG'S IDEAS REGARDING DREAMS OF *CAVES.*
I'VE JUST REALISED, THAT MUST BE WHAT PROMPTED MY *NIGHTMARE...*
PERHAPS. OR AT LEAST, PERHAPS SUCH THEORIES MIGHT HELP *EXPLAIN* IT.
WHY, YES. I-I LOST SOMEONE RECENTLY. H-HER NAME WAS *LILY.*
P-PERHAPS THAT'S WHY I DREAMED OF *LILITH*, PURSUING ME. PERHAPS UNDERNEATH EVERYTHING, I'M PURSUED BY *GUILT*. YOU KNOW. F-FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO HELP MORE...
UH... D-DID I HAVE A HAT WHEN I CAME IN?
I DIDN'T NOTICE ONE. DID YOU, MR. SUYDAM?
NO. NO, I DON'T THINK SO. I'M SORRY FOR YOUR ACCIDENT, MR. BLACK. GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR *STUDIES.*
PER-REN YEN JWAN!
TH-THANKS. THE INFORMATION YOU'VE PROVIDED MAKES ME WANT TO INVESTIGATE THESE THINGS *FURTHER*. IT'S HELPED ME REACH A BIG DECISION ABOUT MY *FUTURE...*
THAT'S WONDERFUL. IT'S LOVELY TO HAVE MET YOU, MR. BLACK.
PER-REN MEN BEKIRIN!
PER-REN TAWSI YEN JWAN!
YOU TOO, MISS GERRITSEN. AND THANKS AGAIN, MR. SUYDAM. I KNOW IT SOUNDS CORNY, BUT TODAY MAY HAVE GIVEN MY LIFE A NEW *DIRECTION.*
I HOPE SO. GOOD DAY TO YOU, MR. BLACK.

PER-REN YEN JWAN!
PER-REN JWAN YEN MELEK TAUS...
Providence

June 9TH

Possible idea – image recalled from dream: an old and wild-eyed man, with stringy white hair and ragged clothing, very spindly and frail of build, carries an enormous corroded ship's anchor, balanced effortlessly on his shoulder, across the bed of a dried-up ocean littered with shells and fish bones.

Perhaps a story, told in something of a De Maupassant manner, about an artist a bit like the Duchamp fellow who caused such a stir at the Armory Exhibition that I went to with Lily – was that really six years ago? – with his nude that they said was like an explosion in a shingle factory. What if it transpired that his model actually looked like that? Better if the artist turns out to actually see the whole world like that, with a horrible implication that he sees world this way because this is how world is in reality, beyond the narrow range of our human senses. Not sure if I could make such a wild idea seem plausible – probably not –

June 17th

The Narcissus story retold – maybe it's called 'Narcissus Blinked' – with a different conclusion. Narcissus finally grows bored with gazing at his own reflection, and leaves his mirrored pool behind and unattended while while he goes gallivanting in the carnal world. When he eventually wearies of his adventures and returns to his looking-glass he finds that his reflection has wasted away from neglect, or has taken its own life and is nowhere to be found, not in any mirror or puddle. Lacking his beloved double, Narcissus is now truly alone and uncared for. This might work as a sort of Symbolist drama. I suppose, or would it be better as a poem? Sated at last, Narcissus had bestown / His gaze on faces other than his own. I'm not even certain that 'bestown' is a real word.

June 25th

Another dream – am diagnosed as dead by a doctor – "It's only a matter of time until you can't go on. You must put your affairs in order." In street outside I see two putrefying corpses walking along together – am revolted by them, but realize that this will soon be my own condition – ghastly –

June 28th

Well, what a day! I really don't know where to start, but I certainly have to say something about Detective Thomas Malone. At least six feet tall, built like a Greek god, truly beautiful of countenance, and he's read Guillot! He is, to my eye, an example of masculine perfection, and it really makes me wonder if today hasn't all been a dream. To begin at the beginning, last week I told Posey that I needed to take time off from the Herald, just a week or two, although if I'm completely honest even then I think I knew that it was likely to end up as something much more permanent. I told him I was keen to follow up a lead I'd got from Dr. Alvarez about that Arab book of magic and its followers in modern day America — that much at least is true — and that I needed to consult the dealer and supplier Alvarez had mentioned, Mr. Robert Suydam out in Flatbush. Posey did a great deal of harrumphing but relented when I mentioned that the book contained instructions for reviving corpses. Posey started working at the Herald in the younger Jimmy Gordon's day and has the old reprobate's instinct for a ghoulish yarn. He even went so far as to suggest I write a letter to the aforementioned Tom Malone, a contact of the paper working out of Brooklyn's Borough Hall police house which I did, receiving in response a nicely-worded missive asking me to meet with the detective in Red Hook.

It's quite a place, completely overrun by immigrants although I must admit they bring a lot of colorful and interesting aspects to the neighbourhood. Tom showed me an old church down near the waterfront now serving as a dance-hall, when its cellars aren't in use for Mr. Suydam's occult lectures. There was something that I found a bit unsettling about the place, although by that point I confess that I was paying more attention to Tom's magnificent profile than I was to all the things that he was telling me. We walked together out to Suydam's place in Flatbush — I'd not previously realised that Red Hook extended quite that far — and Tom suggested that we sit and have a cup of coffee while awaiting Suydam's imminent arrival. That was his suggestion, I should add, and not my own. Frankly, if he'd suggested that we throw ourselves off of the Brooklyn Bridge, right at that moment I'd have thought it was a swell idea. We talked about all sorts of things. Tom was concerned about the Versailles treaty, which I think he said was being signed today, and when I

told him all about the book I planned to write he seemed excited and enthusiastic, saying that he'd like to read it when I finished it. He's such a sweet and earnest man. There was a moment when, I don't know, I'm not really sure and I don't want to make too much of it, but where it seemed that he was more than interested. Or perhaps men are just naturally warmer and more physically affectionate as friends in Dublin. Anyway, before I had a chance to clarify the situation Suydam turned up in the old Dutch Reform cemetery just across the street. Tom gave me his address (and I've of course committed it to memory) making me promise that I'd call on him and let him see the book when I was finished. I'm already pretty feverish just thinking of the dedication I can write upon the flyleaf in his copy!

I accosted Suydam in the graveyard and to my surprise was asked immediately back to his adjacent residence, so eager was he to unload his esoteric bric-a-brac on a potential customer. I really don't know what to make of him. He knows his stuff and he was readily forthcoming with all sorts of information on the Arab book and how it ended up here in America, but there was something sly and seedy in his manner that I didn't care for. While we sat there in his big decrepit parlour and he sold me his alarmingly expensive pamphlets — one of which I've stuck an excerpt from into this journal, opposite — we had our conversation interrupted by none other than Cornelia Gerritsen, she of the Bayside Gerritsens, no less. It seems that she belongs to Suydam's occult studies group, no doubt because Theosophy and similar exotic schools of thought are currently the fashion in her set, although on this occasion she was there on business from a fruiterer's or grocery store that Suydam must presumably have some sort of a stake in. There was something they were both required to deal with, leaving me to let myself out, whereupon I gave in to temptation and did the most foolish and embarrassing thing I have ever done, descending into Suydam's cellar like some dime-novel detective. I immediately passed out cold thanks to a gas-leak that I'd already been warned about.

With hindsight, I deserved the subsequent horrific nightmare or hallucination I experienced, where I went down some ancient stairs to an impossibly huge cavern under Suydam's house, immense enough to hold a vast black ocean with great jutting piers made from jet or obsidian. If that's what my imagination has the capability of conjuring then I am definitely making the right choice in leaving New York and the Herald to pursue my writing. It was

like a scene from Poe — no, it was more bizarre than that. There was a pedestal or altar made of solid gold, that had a litter of suspiciously small human bones around it, and then, worst of all, there was this luminous and glowing female monster chasing me along that hideous seashore. In my dream I somehow knew this was the demon Lilith that I'd just been speaking of with Suydam. It was all so vivid, like no dream I've ever had. Although it was humiliating to be woken up by Suydam and Miss Gerritsen, who were both clearly wondering what I was doing down the cellar in the first place if I'd slept a moment longer I'm convinced that I'd be dead now of a heart-attack. The strange thing was that I'd been talking with Tom earlier about Professor Jung's ideas concerning dreams and the subconscious, and I realized almost instantly that this was all to do with Lily and my guilty conscience, with my subterranean way of life and buried feelings, all enacted in the deep caves of my own mind. I may even have said some of this to Gerritsen and Suydam when they rescued me. The kind of nonsense I was babbling when I came round. I'm sure that both of them were glad to see my back. I really am the most unutterable idiot.

Returning home, I read both Suydam's fascinating pamphlets... one on Faust and the Kabbalah, and the previously mentioned essay on the Arab book and its New England adherents, of which I here enclose an extract. The Kabbalah leaflet has some valuable material regarding Lilith — she's apparently associated with the star Algol in Perseus, and is the only Kabbalistic demon to command both the material sphere and sphere of dreams, both of which were once regarded as two parts of one continuous realm. This made me think about my dream, and about Jung's ideas. It made me wonder whether I could write a story where the world of dreams was somehow literally underground, Jung's metaphor of a subconscious underworld made concrete, although how to get across a tenuous and poorly thought-out demi-concept of this nature is, of course, another matter.

Suydam mentioned the Boggs Gold Refinery in Massachusetts, and I'm seriously thinking about handing in my notice at the Herald, giving up on this apartment and just going there. It's a big jump, but I've got to do something to shake off what New York's become for me. Oh, well — and so to bed, where I'm expecting thoughts of Tom Malone to lull me into blissful slumber!

and thereby exemplify this process, let us turn to that most rare and fabled of the Arab grimoires, the Kitab al Hikmah al Najmiyya or 'Book of the Wisdom of the Stars'. This extraordinary document, at once compendium of medical or scientific curiosities and metaphysical prophetic text, quite unlike any other writings of its period, is said to have been authored by one Khālid Ibn Yazīd in the year 703 A.D. Regarded as the father of all Arab alchemy, Khālid is said to have brought the idea of coinage to the Muslim world, as well as possibly the manufacture of gunpowder a full century before its stated origins in China. Although the events surrounding Khālid's writing of the manuscript are lost to us, there are some portions of the work, most notably a lengthy section in what would appear to be a unknown alphabet, that seem to argue for the Kitab being a received work written in a visionary state, perhaps not unlike the so-styled Enochian alphabet of Dr. John Dee, Queen Elizabeth's astrologer and alchemist, and his associate Edward Kelly. Anecdotal evidence contends that Khālid himself claimed to have first seen the book in dreams; unusually specific dreams which he believed were being sent to him from somewhere in the constellation that we know as Taurus, hence the title of his magnum opus.

Khālid, sometimes also known as Hali, seems to have composed his grimoire in distinct parts. Early chapters outline, amongst other things, proposals for a new philosophy of medicine which seems to offer four techniques for either the extension of the human lifespan or revitalising of the recently deceased. Another passage would appear to outline a proposal for a new approach to mathematics, most specifically the science of geometry. By far the most contentious element of Khālid's work, however, is the previously mentioned unknown alphabet, the language in which Khālid claimed to have originally received the prophecies and metaphysical conceptions that are prevalent throughout the later sections of his book. Here we find ruminations on eternity as an unchanging solid, the idea of time itself demoted from a matter of duration to one of mere distance in a higher mathematical dimension. There are also startling descriptions of cosmology and of the novel entities at large within the author's monstrously expanded vision of the universe. Most notably, there are suggestive passages referring to an altered view regarding the relationship between dreams and reality, with implications of a vastly different version of terrestrial history arising from this notion.

There are various stories told of Khālid's ultimate demise, though all agree that this took place during the year 704 A.D., just one year after the completion of his otherworldly tome.

Most of the tales depict a peaceful end, including some that have the alchemist returning to the Caliphate that was his birthright, although there is one less reassuring variant that has him torn to pieces in broad daylight by invisible malignant Djinns or demons, possibly as punishment for having written his heretical Kitab al Hikmah al Najmiyya, although later scholars have more plausibly suggested that the alchemist may have instead suffered dismemberment when caught up in a desert whirlwind.

Staggeringly blasphemous in its essential nature, contravening many fundamental tenets of Mohammedan belief, following Khālid's death and his enshrinement as a pillar of Arabian scientific thought his final work became a great embarrassment to the religion of his forebears. Unwilling to renounce such a prestigious figure, the Kitab al Hikmah al Najmiyya was itself refuted, firstly as a book to which the authorship of Khālid was erroneously attributed and then, more lately, as a book which had indeed never existed save as slanderous rumor. Given that the Kitab at this time was no more than a handful of covertly copied manuscripts, its nonexistence was thus readily believed. To this day, most Mohammedan authorities insist that there was never any work by Khālid of that title, and that any later publications which purport to be the Kitab are malicious forgeries intended to part gullible collectors from their money or, worse, to discredit the Mohammedan faith by association. For these reasons it became the custom not to even mention Khālid's book by name, accounting for the general ignorance of Western occult scholars with regard to this enormously important text.

This would be the status of the Kitab for the following five hundred years, almost precisely, as if these events were following some lengthy cyclical configuration of the stars themselves. In 1203 A.D. a copy of Khālid's lost masterpiece seems to have found its way into the no-doubt eager hands of the revered Mohammedan alchemic scholar Ahmad Ibn 'Ali Ibn Yusuf Al-Buni, who would revise the somewhat feverishly-written text with his interpolated commentaries, casting knowledgeable and revealing light on parts of Khālid's book which had been previously opaque. It is a testament, however, to the Kitab and its lasting notoriety that even a respected sage such as Al-Buni chose to conceal his revisions of this ill-regarded work beneath a cloak of nameless anonymity, his contributions unattributed save in oral tradition. Nonetheless, it is Al-Buni's annotated and expanded version that first underwent translation into Latin circa 1250 A.D., with Al-Buni

himself by that time safely dead and buried for a quarter of a century. Allegedly by order of the Christian King of Castile, Alfonso the Wise, the book's Latin translation was conducted at Toledo, centre of alchemical and intellectual life in Moorish Spain, where the great minds of the Judaic, Christian and Mohammedan religions coexisted peacefully and traded esoteric knowledge for some several hundred years.

Thus Khālid's suppressed and largely forgotten work became available to European scholars for the first time, coinciding with the flowering of the Renaissance. Its first Latin publication was in Venice during 1498 in an edition of no more than fifty copies published by Aldus Manutius, the inventor of Italic script, three years before the founding of his celebrated Aldine Press, perhaps in an attempt to 'test the waters' before launching on this more substantial and demanding venture. Seeing light of day between the advent of the printing press in the mid 15th century and the commencement of the 16th in 1501, this first Latin edition of the Kitab, titled Liber Stella Sapiente, is thus part of that most rare and venerated category of publications known as incunabula. There are believed to be three copies extant in the present day, all in the hands of highly secretive and very wealthy scholars, two of them in Europe and the third in Asia Minor.

An English edition was eventually published during 1651, ironically just when Oliver Cromwell's Puritan post-revolutionary regime was at its peak, though there were a surprising number of important occult books published in England in the midst of this repressive period, the works of Paracelsus being only one example. This 17th century publication, called 'Hali's Booke of the Wisdom of the Stars' was translated or 'Englished' by one Robert Turner, who gives his Greek motto on the frontispiece as 'Philomathes' ('lover of mathematics'), possibly a reference to Khālid's revolutionary conceptions of geometry contained within the Kitab. The same frontispiece describes the books as being published 'London, printed by J.C. for N. Brook and J. Harrison; and are to be sold at their shops at the Angel in Cornhil, at the Holy Lamb neer the east end of Paul's.' This new English edition became widely circulated throughout Europe and was particularly popular in France, despite or possibly because of its inclusion on the 'Index Liber Prohibitorum' in that fiercely Catholic nation. It was this edition, then, that would be brought into America from France by fleeing Huguenot and occult scholar Etienne Roulet, who landed at East Greenwich in Rhode Island during February, 1686.

Figure I.

Figure II.

Figure III.

Roulet (see Figure I) is an intriguing figure. He presented himself as a devout Huguenot, part of the Calvinist community famed for their lace- and ribbon-making expertise who had enjoyed much civil and religious liberty in France since 1598's Edict of Nantes, instituted by Henry the Fourth for their protection. Catholic King Louis the Fourteenth, however, saw fit to revoke this edict favouring the Protestant sect during 1685, leading to persecutions and the subsequent migration of the Huguenots in a wide diaspora. This much would appear to readily account for Roulet's passage to America in the harsh winter months of early 1686, although on close inspection there is much in Roulet's background to suggest a more expedient motive for his flight than simple Calvinism.

Roulet's mother, born as Marie Delaroche in 1616 at Pithiviers near Orléans, had been placed in a convent at the age of fourteen as a means of curbing her 'conduite sans distinction' or promiscuous behaviour. It is alleged that she was a novitiate nun at Loudun during 1634 at the time of the famous witch-hysteria, only her tender age preserving her from the fate met by many of her sisters or that of the tragic Father Urbain Grandier, who suffered immolation. Instead, having left her order in disgrace before the age of twenty, Delaroche lived for a time with France's gypsy people, possibly acquainting herself with their worship of Diana as described in Mr. Leyland's book Aradia, before ensconcing herself in the more respectable confines of the progressive Huguenot community at St. Denis. It was in this heady environment that she encountered, at the age of thirty-three, the sixty year-old Guillaume Roulet, late of Caude. Reputedly by turn a passionate and energetic lover or a savage brute given to acts of wanton violence, Guillaume Roulet was the only son of Jacques Roulet of Caude whom, we discover in the writings of S. Baring Gould, was during 1598 charged with lycanthropy. There is the possibility that Jacques Roulet may have at one point seen or even actually possessed the 1498 Latin edition of the Liber Stella Sapiente published by Aldus Manutius, if only by virtue of the lengthy passages within that volume which discuss the transformation between man and animal in terms of what appears to be an early application of atomic theory. Such, at least, was the contention of his grandson Etienne Roulet, born St. Denis in 1650, from whose correspondence many of the above details are derived. Although perhaps coincidental there is some support for this connection between Roulet and the Liber Stella Sapiente in the work of the French author Claude Guillot, whose 1887 novel Sous le Monde refers to both the Kitab and

the case of Jacques Roulet of Caude in the infamous so-called pornographic sequence during which the decadent protagonist Cesar encourages his wife to couple with a tame wolf on a diamond-studded lead in hope of lycanthropic offspring. Nonetheless, there yet remains the possibility that all of the above is a concoction shaped by Etienne Roulet himself, if that indeed should prove to be his actual name. Baring-Gould's Book of Were-wolves, mentioning the case of Jacques Roulet, was published in the year preceding Etienne's arrival in East Greenwich and the somewhat furtive thirty-six year-old may well have borrowed both a new name and a glamorous new history from Baring-Gould's then-popular and current treatise; fabricating for himself a new identity to suit his new life in America.

Whatever Etienne Roulet's true provenance and quite regardless of his cited occult pedigree, we can at least be certain that on his arrival in Rhode Island, in the company of his young wife Mathilde of whom little is known, he was already well-versed in the esoteric arts, and that he brought with him a cherished copy of the rare but recent 1651 Turner translation of Hali's Booke of the Wisdom of the Stars. This book is the main topic of the lengthy correspondence between Etienne Roulet and Hekeziah Massey (Figure II). This correspondence, which had been commenced in 1685, appears to be the reason why Roulet migrated to New England in the first place, rather than some equally congenial locale. His friendship and later alliance with the strange figure of Massey would prove of unparalleled importance both to Roulet's subsequent Rhode Island exploits and to the still-widening influence of the Kitab al Hikmah al Najmiyya within the United States.

Massey herself presents as enigmatic a persona as Roulet and was like him a European émigré, though of a slightly older vintage. Born in Knaresborough in Yorkshire, England, in the August of 1613 as Hekeziah Williams, she was married at the age of sixteen to a 'common peddler' named Aloysius Massey. Massey hanged at York Assizes in October 1640, where he stood accused of murdering three women whom, allegedly, had been in his employ as prostitutes. His twenty-seven year old wife but narrowly escaped following Massey to the gallows by insisting she'd known nothing of where the dead women's wedding rings and personal effects, which she had tried to sell, had come from. After Aloysius Massey's execution Hekeziah, who may well have also been employed by her procurer husband, seems to have been shunned by her appalled community and over the next decade to have justifiably acquired a reputation as diabolist or witch. During the aftermath of Cromwell's revolu-

tion and the English Civil War, which raged from 1642 to 1646, in 1652 the widowed Massey felt compelled to flee the wave of witchcraft trials that had accompanied the new regime and relocated to the town of Manchester, New Hampshire, where the striking thirty-nine year-old soon re-established both her reputation as a sorceress and as a harlot or adulteress. Nor did the tales of her voracious appetites and monstrously perverted inclinations see decrease as Hekeziah aged to a repellent crone of more than seventy, the remnants of her former beauty only making evident the ravages which she had brought upon herself by her malignant personality and practices.

While rumours of her sexual activities may be no more than the malicious gossip which a woman living on her own in a small town might commonly be subject to, there may be some corroborative evidence in Hekeziah's clear familiarity with the Kitab al Hikmah al Najmiyya, even prior to her correspondence with Roulet, and with the outré passages of sexual philosophy which it in part contains. It is not known how Massey first became aware of the book and its contents, although it may be conjectured that she had at some point in the year preceding her escape from England been allowed to thoroughly peruse the freshly-published Hali's Booke, even if she at that time was unable to afford its purchase. Certainly, in her first letters to Roulet inviting him and his young wife Mathilde to migrate to New England and escape the persecutions of their homeland, Hekeziah makes provocative and knowing references to that section of the Kitab, known in English as 'The Azure Garden', which provides instructions for specific carnal acts conducted in specific settings as a means of harnessing essential occult energies. Her missive of September, 1685, crudely alludes to 'spendings born of a prohibited excitement' which in certain circumstances can 'provoke a blewness of the aire' conducive to the presence of 'our true and sertain friends'. From what may be deduced of Khālid's writings in this controversial passage of the Kitab, the 'prohibited excitements' recommended would seem to encompass necrophilia and bestiality (presumably the source of Guillot's Sous le Monde obscenities) along with what seems a great prevalence of incest, chiefly that between parents of either gender and their offspring. Etienne Roulet at one point hinted at a sexual union with his allegedly promiscuous and witchcraft-oriented mother, seemingly accomplished in a specially-constructed chamber with 'walls interleaved of cedar-wood and beaten bronze', although how this arrangement could enhance or otherwise affect the Oedipal encounter is unclear. Some commentators have implied a

correlation between the techniques suggested in the pages of 'The Azure Garden' and the Tantric disciplines emerging from the oriental world in roughly the same period, although in terms of purpose, method and philosophy there would seem to be insurmountable dissimilarities.

With the Roulets' arrival in New England in the February of 1686, the septuagenarian Massey proved invaluable in introducing them to similarly occult-minded parties of her personal acquaintance, notably some sea-captains of dubious repute who berthed in the vicinity when they were not at sea. These counted in their number Captain Shadrach Annesley, commander of the very vessel which transported Etienne and Mathilde Roulet to America. A word may be in order here regarding the importance of sea-captains to the grimoires of the 17th and 18th centuries, before such works became the province of the 19th century's gentlemen occultists and their illustrious publishers. In many instances, as with the 18th century Grimoire Pour Conjurer Lesprit Dun Lieu ('Grimoire to conjure the spirit of a place'), anonymous sea-captains are invoked as suitably exotic sources to lend credibility to an allegedly authentic magical tradition of longstanding. While we might suppose that many of these figures were invented to provide a semblance of antique authority for relatively modern writings, personages such as Captain Annesley suggest there may at times have been a grain of truth in these accounts of mystically-inclined marine adventurers and the forbidden knowledge they brought home with them from unimaginably foreign ports of call. Sea-captains such as Annesley, old salts from Marblehead or Salem, would in time play a substantial role in the transmission of the Kitab in America while Shadrach Annesley can justifiably be said to have been with the venture since its outset, albeit in a limited capacity: Annesley was in the employ of a third occult scholar who, with Massey and Roulet, would form a basis for the subsequent dissemination of the Kitab and its 'Wisdom of the Stars', the Massachusetts shipping company owner Japheth Colwen (Figure III).

Due to the scarcity and incompleteness of provincial records for this period, contemporary research has managed to unearth comparatively little about Colwen in relation to the relatively detailed pictures that have been compiled of Colwen's close associates Etienne Roulet and Hekeziah Massey. It is estimated that his birth-date was most probably at some point in the 1650s, although some have argued for an even later date of 1660 on the basis of Colwen's much talked about youthful appearance. In the estimation of the current author,

although people would put Colwen's age at roughly twenty-six years old for the remainder of his life, it seems unlikely that a person of such tender years would have acquired the acumen to run a shipping business, much less had sufficient time for the requisite studies needed to become the learned occult scholar introduced to Etienne Roulet in August, 1686. If we suppose that Japheth Colwen was, like Roulet, in his middle-thirties when they met, then this allows us to at least make an attempt at a provisional chronology. A passenger named 'Colwyn' was amongst those listed on The Mayflower during its historic voyage of 1620. While this individual may indeed be wholly unrelated to the similarly-named subject of our enquiry, there remains the possibility that this previous Colwyn sired a family upon arrival in the New World, one son going on to father in his turn our Japheth Colwen in approximately 1650.

It transpires that Colwen had been a sometime associate of Massey's since the middle 1670s, when he had contacted the older woman upon hearing of her brief association with the Kitab which, as we have already established, probably occurred in 1651 when Massey may have read the newly-published Hali's Booke a year before her passage to New England. Even Massey's no doubt only partial recollections of the work had been sufficient to awaken Colwen's intense curiosity, and we can but imagine his excitement at the news that one of Massey's far-flung correspondents had but recently migrated to Rhode Island, bringing the English translation of the fabulous Kitab al Hikmah al Najmiyya with him. Massey introduced the Roulets to an eager and enthusiastic Colwen at the latter's Salem residence on August 20th, 1686. According to surviving diary entries made by Colwen, much of the day was spent in scrutinizing and discussing Hali's Booke; the sexual, astronomical, mathematical and medical material which it contained, but most especially the book's delirious prophetic texts. Inspired by mentions in these of the prophesied 'Redeemer, by whose byrthe the great disorder of our worlde shalle be putt right when that which is below shalle once more be above', Roulet, Colwen and Massey there and then decided they would institute an order for the further promulgation of the Kitab's teachings. Hekeziah Massey is recorded as originator of the name 'Worshipful Order of the Stella Sapiente', and the founding of the coven was reportedly then celebrated with an 'antient ritual described by Hali' which we may suppose to have been chosen from those pages called collectively 'The Azure Garden'. How Mathilde Roulet may have responded to these circumstances at which she was undoubtedly present is unfortunately not re-

corded, although there remains a sense that Mathilde was not nearly so enthused by the events of that late Summer's day as was her husband Etienne.

The order, still at this point operating in conditions of strict secrecy, explored the possibilities inherent in the Kitab for a little over five years at locations in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, gathering new members as it went. One of the earliest of these was Captain Shadrach Annesley, and although Roulet's fledgling order would attract both fine New England gentry and backwoods recluses to its fold, sea-captains such as Annesley remained a large part of its membership. By 1692, however, with the witch-hysteria in Colwen's native Salem rapidly becoming a consuming frenzy, it was clear that things could not continue as they had done in the past. Most catastrophically, it was in January of that year that Hekeziah Massey was accused of witchcraft.

Massey's arrest and questioning were public matters at the time, but since the unrepentant Massey was reported to have disappeared from a locked cell at some point during her incarceration, there was never to be any execution, and for this reason her name is seldom listed among victims of the Salem persecutions, although she is sometimes named as an associate of one Giles Corey from Northampton, England, who was tortured unto death during the Salem panic. Massey's disappearance, though widely believed to have been readily accomplished by the offering of sexual favours to her jailer, would appear to be the reason for the near-immediate flight of Japheth Colwen out of Salem, understandably concerned that to remain in Massachusetts would invite attentions not dissimilar to those which had contributed to Massey's vanishing.

It was most probably the urgings of Roulet that prompted Japheth Colwen to select Rhode Island as his new home, since the Roulets had been at least semi-respected residents of Greenwich for the previous six years. Unlike its neighbouring sister-states, Rhode Island still somewhat enjoyed a reputation as a haven for free-thinkers and, to the state's credit, was not to succumb to the same barbarism that afflicted many other corners of New England in those overwrought and superstitious times. At any rate, it seems that Colwen's new Rhode Island residency was agreeable enough to lure the Roulets, five years later, from their Greenwich rooms to a new berth which would be suitable for them at 135 Benefit Street in

CHAPTER 3

"To me there is nothing
more fraught with mystery
& terror than a remote
Massachusetts farmhouse
against a lonely hill.
Where else could an
outbreak like the Salem
witchcraft have occurred?"

–To Elizabeth Toldridge,
October 9, 1931

ROBERT? OVER *HERE*...
MY DEAR BOY, WHEREVER ARE YOU OFF TO THAT REQUIRES SO MUCH *LUGGAGE?*
YOU MUST TRAVEL WITH MORE FROCKS THAN NANCY *CUNARD*...
HA. HELLO, CHARLES. NO, I'M JUST GETTING OUT OF TOWN FOR A WHILE, RESEARCHING A BOOK ON NEW ENGLAND.
I DIDN'T REALISE ALL THIS WOULD BE HAPPENING TODAY...
I KNOW! ISN'T IT *THRILLING?* I HEAR BILL FIELDS IS PICKETING ON BROADWAY.
JUST THE THING TO TAKE OUR MINDS OFF ALL THIS GHASTLY *PROHIBITION.*
WELL, WHAT I HEAR, IT'LL NEVER BE ENFORCED.
I GUESS THINGS MUST BE PRETTY BAD IF *VAUDEVILLE* IS UP IN ARMS...
EQUITY COULDN'T VERY WELL LEAVE US *OUT*; COULD THEY? THEY DON'T WANT US USED AS *STRIKEBREAKERS*.
IT'S ALL TERRIBLY DESPERATE, ALL THIS UNREST AFTER WHAT WENT ON IN POOR OLD RUSSIA.

MARINI'S RESTAURANT
CAFE
I MEAN, I'M SURE NOBODY WANTS *THAT.*
III: A LURKING FEAR

...MASSACHUSETTS AND NEW HAMPSHIRE! ALL ***ABOARD...***
...TO LOOK FOR SOMEWHERE ELSE TO LIVE WHILE WE'RE AWAY WITH ***GRANDMA.*** SOMEWHERE WHERE THERE'RE MORE PEOPLE LIKE ***US.*** WOULDN'T THAT BE NICE?
OH, LOOK, HE'S BLOWING US A KISS. WON'T YOU WAVE TO HIM, DEAR?
GOODBYE, FATHER! GOODBYE...
Judge

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, I HEAR YOU GOOD ENOUGH.
NOW, STATE YOUR BUSINESS OR BE ON YOUR WAY.
I, UH, I HAVE A RESERVATION AT THE HILLMAN HERE. A ROOM FOR ROBERT BLACK...?
OH, IT'S BLACK, IS IT? BLACK...
AH, YEAH. I SEE NOW WHAT SHE'S DONE. SHE'S PUT YOU DOWN AS MR. BLOCK.
YOU TALK SO QUICK, YOU FOLK FROM UP THE SHORE. SHE GETS OUT OF HER DEPTH.
WELL, THIS ALL SEEMS TO BE IN ORDER.
POSSIBLY YOU'D CARE TO FOLLOW ME UPSTAIRS, IF YOU'VE A MIND.

THERE.
IT CAN BE A MITE DAMP WHEN IT'S WINTER, BUT YOU WON'T COME TO AN EASIER BERTH THIS END O' TOWN.
NO, NO, THIS IS FINE.
LISTEN, I'D HOPED TO VISIT WITH A MR. TOBIT BOGGS WHO HAS HIS GOLD REFINERY HERE IN SALEM. DO YOU KNOW WHERE I MIGHT FIND HIM?
HO, NOW! THE BOY BOGGS, HE'S WELL KNOWN HEREABOUTS.
THERE'S OFFICES ACROSS THE SQUARE YOUR BUS COME INTO, BUT THERE'S ONLY SELDOM ANYBODY PRESENT.
BEST HOPE'S THE REFINERY 'CROSS NORTH RIVER. GO PAST THE LODGE HOUSE AND ST. JOAD'S, YOU'LL FIND IT RIGHT ENOUGH.
IS IT FAR? CAN I WALK THERE?
AYE, THAT WOULD BE HOW TO DO IT, LEST YOU PLAN ON SWIMMIN'. WE'VE A WANT OF TRANSPORT LOCALLY.
SAFE PASSAGE, MR. BLACK.
I'M HOPIN' THAT OUR AIR DOWN HERE AGREES WITH YOU, NOW.

HILLMAN HOTEL
FRIENDS OF OANNES
HUH.
CHURCH OF St. JUDE

BOGGS' REFINERY
ESTABLISHED 1754
...ONE LOOKS TO BE A CLERGYMAN AS I ONCE ENTERTAINED.
YOU'VE A POWERFUL GIFT FOR THE RARE SALVAGE, YOUNG BOGGS.
IT IS MY FORTUNE, INCREASE, TO HAVE A CONSIDERABLE BOUNTY WASH UP AT MY DOOR.
INCREASE'S VITAL-JARS AIN'T BUT THE HALF OF IT. I THOUGHT I'D SEED THE LAST O' THIS HERE BOOK O' AFRIKEE.
MY SALTS, LOOK AT THIS FELLOW ALL ABOUT THE MEAT-BLOCK...
SURE ENOUGH, YOU'VE DONE US PROUD, BOGGS. IT'S WORTH EVERY LAST DOUBLOON. JUST THIS ONE WITH THE GREENISH GLASS ALONE...

...I FANCY THIS IS PASTOR SLEET'S WORK. HE WAS ALWAYS VERY GOOD WITH...
UM... EXCUSE ME. I DON'T MEAN TO BE RUDE, BARGING IN, BUT THE DOOR WAS OPEN, SO...
M-MY NAME'S ROBERT BLACK. I-I'M LOOKING FOR A MR. TOBIT BOGGS.
I AM MAD, I AM MAD FOREVER AND GOD IS THE SHIT OF NOTHING, NOTHING...
WHY, THEN, YOU'RE A MAN OF FORTUNE, FOR YOU'VE FOUND HIM! I AM TOBIT BOGGS.
I'VE A CARD FROM MR. SUYDAM IN THE TOWN OF FLATBUSH, SAYING AS I MIGHT EXPECT YOU.
I FEAR YOU'VE CAUGHT ME IN THE TRADE THAT IS MY LIVELIHOOD.
I'LL COVER THESE AFORE THE LIGHT GETS TO 'EM...

UH, WELL, ACTUALLY IT WAS YOUR CURIO BUSINESS I WAS INTERESTED IN.
I HOPE I'M NOT INTRUDING...
OH, THESE WERE LEAVIN' ANYWAYS. THIS HERE'S MR. INCREASE ORNE FROM MARBLEHEAD AND MASTER SHADRACH FROM ALONG THE VALLEY.
RIGHT TICKLED TO MEET YOU, MISTER. SMELLS TO ME LIKE YOU'RE A JEW, WOULD THAT BE RIGHT?
UH, I, I MAY HAVE JEWISH ANCESTORS, B-BUT...
OH, NAOW, DON'T TAKE ON. I LIKES THE SMELL WHAT YOU JEW FELLERS HAVE. PUTS ME IN MIND O' HIGH-SPICED SALMAGUNDI...
SHADRACH, THAT'S SUFFICIENT. LET'S LEAVE THESE TWO TO THEIR BUSINESS.
I SWAN, YOU'DA CUDDLED OLD COMSTOCK IF'N HE'D WORN A DASH O' MUSTARD.
HA HA HA! INCREASE, YOU'RE JUST TERRIBLE!
YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT HERE, MR. BLACK, WHILE I SHOW THESE TWO FELLERS OUT?
SHOULDN'T WANT YOU RUNNIN' INTO ANY GAS LEAKS LIKE AT OLD BOB SUYDAM'S, SHOULD US?
HA... NO. NO, I GUESS NOT. YOU GO AHEAD. I'LL BE FINE RIGHT WHERE I AM.

THERE. RIGHT SORRY T'KEEP YOU WAITIN', MR. BLACK. WHAT CAN I DO YOU FOR?
UM, WELL, MR. SUYDAM MAYBE MENTIONED IN HIS LETTER, I WAS INTERESTED IN A BOOK YOU ONCE COPIED OUT FOR HIM.
THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN AROUND FIFTEEN YEARS BACK, AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF AN ARAB WORK ABOUT ALCHEMY...
THAT WOULD BE MR. HALI'S BOOK. I RECOLLECT I HAD OLD GARLAND WHEATLEY FROM OUT ATHOL WAY WRITE THAT IN FAIR FOR ME.
HE WAS ASSOCIATIN' WI' THAT ORDER THEN, MIND, AFORE THEIR SPLIT IN 1912 OR SO...
YOU MEAN THE ORDER I READ ABOUT? THEY WERE STILL GOING IN 1912?
WHAT, THEM STELL SAPS? STILL GOIN' TODAY, WHAT I HEAR. 1912 WAS JUST WHEN THEY BROKE WITH THE WHEATLEYS.
IT'D BEEN COMIN' A WHILE, SINCE THEY DREW DOWN THE STONE IN '82.
'COURSE, MY FOLKS HADN'T BEEN WELCOME SINCE GRANPAPPY JACK, FORTY YEAR AFORE THAT.
WHAT, HE WAS AN ACTUAL MEMBER, YOUR GRANDFATHER?
OH, AYE. CAPTAIN JACK BOGGS. HE GOT INTO IT BY THE OTHER SEA-CAPTAINS, HARRISON AND THEM.
IT WAS WHEN HE BRUNG GRANMA PATHITHIA-LEE BACK THEY TURNED AGEN' HIM. PLAIN PREJUDICE, I EXPECT.
WALK DOWN TO THE SQUARE, I CAN SHOW YOU HIS TUNNELS IF YOU'D LIKE.
WELL, IF THAT'S CONVENIENT, FINE...

REFINERY
ESTABLISHED 1754
SO, THIS STELLA SAPIENTE INCLUDED PLENTY OF SEAFARERS?
THAT IT DID. INCREASE, WHO YOU MET, SAILED WI' MY PEOPLE ONCE.
SHADRACH ANNESLEY'S ANOTHER, THOUGH HE GOES BACK A MITE FURTHER.
POOR DEVIL. HAD HIS HOUSE UP THE NAUMKEAG VALLEY HIT BY LIGHTNIN' MORE'N TWENTY YEARS AGO. AIN'T BEEN HALF AS SPRIGHTLY EVER SINCE.
MIND, THE STELL SAPS THESE DAYS, YOUR WADES AND YOUR BURENS, THEY'RE TOO HIGH AND MIGHTY FOR US.
LIKE MY DADDY SAID, WE'RE ALL BORN INTO THE SAME BUCKET.
ASK ME, YOUR BEST BET IS THE WHEATLEY CLAN OUT PAST ATHOL. THEY'RE DOWN T'EARTH FOLKS.
ATHOL... IS THERE A BUS FROM HERE?
THERE'S ONE TOMORROW. GOES UP 'ROUND COLLINS COVE AND BACK DOWN DERBY STREET FIRST, BUT IT'LL GET YOU TO...
WHAT IS IT?
AW, WILL YOU LOOK WHAT THOSE BIG-EARED, CROWDY-EYED BASTARDS HAVE DONE, 'SCUSE MY LANGUAGE.
RIGHT IN FRONT O' SAINT JOAD'S AN' ALL! THEY KNOW THIS IS OUR BAPTIZIN' SEASON...

IT'S A CERTAIN SIGN, FROM INDIA I'M TOLD, WHAT'S CALLED A FILL-FOOT.
OUT ON THE ISLANDS IT'S A SUPERSTITION, MEANS BAD LUCK OR WORSE.
SALEM'S RESPECTABLE SORTS BATE US WITH 'EM. I'D AS SOON WALK ROUND IT IF YOU DON'T MIND.
SURE. THEY WANT YOU OUT, HUH?
RECKON. THEY'VE SHUNNED WATERFRONT FOLKS SINCE GRANMA PATHITHIA-LEE. DON'T WANT DIFFERENT RACES BREEDIN' TOGETHER.
LIKEWISE THEY'RE SORE ABOUT US TAKIN' PLACES LIKE SAINT JOAD'S AND THEIR MASONS' LODGE, WHAT THEY WEREN'T USIN' ANYWAY.
SOMETIMES I BELIEVE THEY'D LIKE TO SEE US ALL LOCKED UP SOMEPLACE, OR POISON US LIKE WE WAS RATS.
THAT'S AWFUL, THAT PEOPLE CAN BE SO *PRIMITIVE*.
FRIENDS OF OANNES
JULY 18 1919
I MEAN, YOU STRIKE ME AS REGULAR FELLOWS. YOU GO TO CHURCH, YOU'VE GOT YOUR MEETING-HALL HERE...
WHAT, FRIENDS OF OANNES? YEAH, THE FRIENDS DO SOME GOOD WORK. OANNES, THAT'S JUST AN ISLAND WORD FOR THE ALMIGHTY.
THERE'S OUR PREMISES, RIGHT UP AHEAD.
BOGGS REFINERY
NOT MUCH, I KNOW, STUCK DOWN THIS EAST END O' THE BRIDGE STREET CRESCENT, BUT WE'RE ABOUT THE ONLY INDUSTRY THEY GOT 'ROUND HERE.
YOU'RE STOPPIN' AT THE HILLMAN OVER THERE, I GUESS. ZEKE HILLMAN GIVES YOU ANY TROUBLE, YOU TELL ME.
UHH... RIGHT. THANKS. SO, WHAT ARE THESE *TUNNELS* YOU'RE SHOWING ME?
EST 1754

WELL, THEY'RE OLD. MY GRANPAPPY FOUND 'EM USEFUL FOR SOME OCCASIONAL SMUGGLIN' AND...
WHY, HOW'D YOU DO, MY LITTLE SIREN? THIS HERE'S MR. BLACK. HE'S THAT HERALD FELLER I TOLD YOU ABOUT.
MR. BLACK, I'D LIKE YOU T'MEET MY WIFE, NEGATHLIA-LOU.
UH, MY PLEASURE, MA'AM, THOUGH I'M NOT WITH THE *HERALD* ANYMORE...
P'HLIZ T'MICHU.
UM, SURE. THANKS...
COME ON, NOW, MR. BLACK. YOU STEP RIGHT THROUGH HERE.
NEGATHLIA-LOU, HONEY, I'M TAKIN' MR. BLACK TO SEE THE CAPTAIN'S RUM-RUN. YOU JUST GO ON WITH YOUR BUSINESS, WE'LL BE BACK UP PRESENTLY.
Y'SEE, IT'S CALLED THE RUM-RUN FOR CONVENIENCE, ALTHOUGH RUM WEREN'T THE HALF OF IT.
GENERALLY, WHAT CAPTAIN JACK BRUNG THROUGH THEM TUNNELS, IT WERE PEOPLE. IMMIGRANTS COME FROM THE ISLANDS, MOSTLY. IT'S HOW WE LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER.
LET ME JUST HEAVE THIS CELLAR DOOR UP OUT THE WAY...
THERE.
YOU GO FIRST, AND I'LL FOLLOW YOU DOWN SOON AS I'VE GOT MY LANTERN LIT.
WELL, IF YOU THINK IT'S SAFE, THEN... I MEAN, SURE.
WHY NOT?

HERE WE ARE. SORRY I TOOK A WHILE. SO, WHAT YOU THINK TO MY NEGATHLIA-LOU? SHE'S QUITE A CATCH, NOW, AIN'T SHE?
AND THEM ISLAND WOMEN, LET ME TELL YOU, THEY DON'T MIND IT IN THE MOUTH OR NOTHIN'.
MM. WELL, YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN.
TH-THESE TUNNELS LOOK ANCIENT...
AYE, THAT'S RIGHT ENOUGH. IT'S SAID THAT THEY WAS HERE AFORE THE SETTLERS COME.
THE OLD REDSKINS KNEW ABOUT 'EM, SO THEY RECKON, AND THOUGHT THEM TO BE ANCIENT EVEN THEN.
BUT... I MEAN, THESE PICTURES. THEY'RE EXTRAORDINARY. IT'S LIKE STUFF ON A MEN'S ROOM WALL, EXCEPT...
D-DID THE INDIANS MAKE THESE?
WHY, BLESS YOU, NO. MIGRATIN' PEOPLE DID THESE FOR A BIT O' FUN, CHIEFLY THE WOMEN.
MAINLY WE HAD FEMALES THROUGH HERE. MARRYIN' DON'T WORK THE OTHER WAY. SOMETHING TO DO WITH WHAT MAKES CRITTERS STOP GROWIN', I'M TOLD.
MR. HALI MENTIONS IT IN HIS WRITINGS.
SO, THESE WRITINGS. YOU'VE SEEN THEM?
NOT PERSONALLY, I'VE NOT, BUT CAPTAIN JACK DID. THAT'S WHERE HE READ ABOUT THE ISLAND PEOPLE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
HERE, GIVE US A HAND WITH THIS BAR, IF YOU WOULD. IT'S A MITE HEAVY...
BOY, I'LL SAY.
WHAT'S IT MADE FROM? IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN FASHIONED BY A UNUSUAL PROCESS...

SAME AS THE DOOR, THEY MADE IT OUT O' CEDAR-WOOD AND BEATEN BRONZE, THE WAY THEY'D BEEN INSTRUCTED.
DONE IT BY THE BOOK.
IT'S SEEN SOME SIGHTS, THIS PLACE, TELL YOU FOR NOTHIN'. ALL THAT EXCITATION YOU CAN FEEL, STILL KINDA SHIVERIN' IN THE AIR...
Y-YES, IT'S... IT'S QUITE SOMETHING.
LISTEN, THIS IS SWELL, BUT I'M FEELING WEARY, LIKE I SHOULD MAYBE RETURN TO THE HOTEL. COULD YOU TAKE ME BACK UP?
PLEASE?
BOGG'S REFINERY
EST 1754

ROBERT?
YEAH?
I WISH WE DIDN'T LIVE SO FAR *UNDERGROUND.* WHAT IF THERE'S A GAS-LEAK?
I CAN SMELL IT IN MY HAIR. MAYBE I SHOULD TRY WEARING IT *DOWN...*
DON'T YOU *DARE!* THE PEOPLE IN MY OFFICE MUSTN'T KNOW THAT WE END UP TOGETHER IN THE SHOWERS.
THEY'D PEACOCK-FEATHER ME IN TARRY WISDOM...
OH, BOBBY, YOU ARE A *CAMP!* THEY WOULDN'T *DREAM* OF IT. EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT YOU AND ME.
AND DON'T WORRY, I'VE GOT MY OWN PRICK NOW. THE PRESIDENT WANTS ALL US WOMEN TO HAVE ONE. SEE?
GEE, PRISSY, THAT'S REALLY BIG. IT'S LIKE AN *OAR.*
WAIT HERE. I'LL GO FIND THAT GAS-LEAK...
WELL, MAKE SURE YOU'RE BACK BEFORE WE PULL INTO MASSACHUSETTS, OR I'LL BE LONELY LIKE WHEN I KILLED MYSELF.
YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU, ROBERT. I DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT.
PRISSY, I LIKE SEAFOOD, BUT I CAN'T ABIDE FISH. WE'RE *THROUGH.*
I THINK THAT LEAK IS COMING FROM SOMEWHERE ALONG HERE...

EXCUSE ME...
SORRY, CAN I GET THROUGH HERE? I'M NOT CROSSING THE PICKET, IT'S JUST THERE'S THIS GAS-LEAK...
YEAH. THEY THINK IT'S LEAKING FROM THE *FUTURE.* CAN'T BE FIXED UNTIL THIS CATTLE-TRAIN ARRIVES THERE.
EVEN *GAS* IS COMING OUT ON STRIKE. THE WHOLE COUNTRY COULD BE BLOWN TO RUSSIA...
AH, IT'LL NEVER BE ENFORCED. WE'RE LETTING OUR DREAMS GET ON TOP OF US.
UM... LISTEN, I THINK I WAS LOOKING FOR SOME PLACE TO TAKE A *LEAK*...
WELL, THERE'S A SUNKEN EXIT GARDEN ON THE PLATFORM THERE.
WE GO 'ROUND COLLINS COVE AND BACK DOWN DERBY STREET, SO YOU'LL HAVE TIME.
...MASSACHUSETTS AND NEW HAMPSHIRE! ALL *ABOARD*...
HEY! HEY, WAIT! THIS IS ONE OF THOSE *GAS* CHAMBERS, LIKE IN BRYANT *PARK.*
I DIDN'T MEAN TO...
OH, NO.
OH, LILY.
NOW I'M NEVER GOING TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

SARLEM NATHACHUSETTS
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE. I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING I'M IN THE WRONG PLACE.
THIS SIGN DOESN'T LOOK RIGHT...
ROBERT! ROBERT, OVER *HERE!* IT'S *ME!*
ISN'T IT TERRIBLE, ALL THIS BUSINESS WITH THE GAS-CHAMBERS?
TOM! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS *LOST.* I'VE BEEN DYING TO BUMP INTO YOU...
AND I FANCY A KISS WITH YOU TOO, BUT IT'S NEVER TO BE.
ROBERT, I READ YOUR BOOK WHAT YOU SENT ME. YOU'LL UNDERSTAND I'D GOT NO CHOICE BUT PASSING IT TO THE AUTHORITIES.
THE *AUTHORITIES?* BUT, TOM, IF MY PARENTS READ THAT, THEY'LL... WAIT A MINUTE. WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
WHEN I GOT YOUR BOOK I INFESTIGATED SUYDAM AND ENDED UP BELOW THE WORLD.
BUT THE GOVERNMENT PEOPLE READING IT DECIDED TO SLUICE ALL THESE UNDERMEN FROM SARLATH'S WATERFRONT. I'M SORRY...
FINALLY, A SALINE *SOLUTION!*
HEY, YOU! I REPRESENT THE *HERALD* AND I WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU TWO ARE HIDING UNDER THE *COVERS!*
WE'RE CONCEALING UNDESIRABLE *ELEMENTS.* SOMETHING SMELLS FISHY ABOUT THEM ISLAND WOMEN. THEY DON'T MIND IT IN THE MOUTH OR NOTHIN'.
THEY'RE HEBREWSEXUALS. THEY END UP TOGETHER IN THE *SHOWERS.*
BOBBY, THEY'RE TRAWLING ME...

P-PRISSY? I-IS THAT *YOU?*
I-I THOUGHT I'D LEFT YOU ON THE *TRAIN.* HOW DID YOU GET HOOKED UP IN THIS?
OH, BOBBY, YOU ARE A CAMP!
THIS IS ALL BECAUSE OF YOUR BOOK, YOU MARBLEHEAD! DID I RUIN YOUR CONCENTRATION? DID I INTERRUPT YOUR MASTERWORK?
PRISSY, IT WASN'T *YOU.* I JUST NEEDED TO GET AWAY FROM NEW YORK AND THE NEWSPAPER.
MY BOOK, MY WORK, IT'S GOING TO MAKE ME *FREE*...
PRISSY? PRISSY, WHERE ARE THEY TAKING YOU?
PRISSY?
NEXT, PLEASE.
MR. ROBERT SCHWARTZ, THE HERALD...
HELLO? DID YOU SAY IT WAS MY TURN NEXT?
I'M ROBERT SCHWARTZ, BUT I QUIT MY JOB AT THE *HERALD*...
OH, YOU'RE THE HERALD, ALL RIGHT. THERE ARE CERTAIN SIGNS.
I THINK IT'S SAFE FOR YOU TO GO IN. THEY'VE STOPPED FLAPPING AND GASPING.

OH, GOD.
MR. AND MRS. BOGGS, PLEASE, I DIDN'T MEAN TO LAND YOU IN ALL THIS TROUBLE.
THEY'VE GUTTED YOUR WHOLE *COMMUNITY*...
KOFF KOFF
WELL, YOU KNOW, THEY MAKE YOU WEAR LITTLE **STARS**. I CAN SEE THE WISDOM IN IT...
THEY'RE SCARED WE'LL **SWAMP** THEM, THAT THEY'LL GET BOGGED DOWN. GO HOME. GO HOME WHILE YOU CAN.
KOFF
UH, WELL, THANKS FOR EVERYTHING, BUT I'M AFRAID I CAN'T KEEP THIS APPOINTMENT.
YOU SEE, I'M A ***REPORTER***. I HAVE TO GO AND MAKE MY ***REPORT***...
OH, WE'LL BE GETTING ROUND TO YOU SOON ENOUGH.
RIGHT NOW I THINK WE'VE BOTH GOT BIGGER FISH TO FRY.
YOU'VE BEEN A FINE OLD WHILE. DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THAT GAS-LEAK, NOW?
YES. I CAN'T TELL YOU ABOUT IT. IT'S TOO ***AWFUL***. IT'S UNNAMEABLE.
WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING TO HELP THEM. I JUST WANT TO GO TO SLEEP AND FORGET ABOUT IT.

DO YOU AT LEAST LOVE ME ENOUGH TO LET ME DO THAT IN PEACE?
DO YOU?
TOM...?
THE HELL?

WELL, NOW, IT'S MR. BLACK, COME TO PAY HIS RECKONIN'. HOPE YOU'VE ENJOYED YOUR STAY AND ALL.
IT'S TWO DOLLARS AN' A HALF, IF THAT'S AGREEABLE.
OH, THAT'S VERY REASONABLE. I SLEPT LIKE A LOG. WHY DON'T WE CALL IT THREE BUCKS AND I'LL TAKE ONE OF THESE PARISH *NEWSLETTERS.*
WHAT, THE OLD 'JOAD'S CODES'? WELL, THAT'S REAL FRIENDLY OF YOU.
I HEAR YOU'RE MOVIN' ON TO ATHOL. BUS DON'T COME 'TIL TONIGHT, BUT THERE'S A REAS'NABLE DINER UP ST. PETER'S STREET.
GLAD I GOT T'MEET THE FELLER ALL THE TALK'S ABOUT.
YOU SEE GARLAND WHEATLEY, TELL HIM AS ZEKE HILLMAN SENDS HIS REGARDS.
Church of St. Jude's
PARISH NEWSLETTER
E SAITH UNTO THEM, COME YE AFTER ME, AND
LL MAKE YOU FISHES OF MEN. MATTHEW 4: 19.

BOY, AM I PLEASED TO SEE YOU. THIS IS THE BUS FOR ATHOL, RIGHT?
YUH. GOT SOME FOLKS T'PICK UP AROUND COLLINS COVE, THEN IT'S STRAIGHT ON T'ATHOL.
IF'N YOU'RE LUCKY AN' THE MOON'S GOOD, MIGHT EVEN GET TO SEE THE SHOALIN' OUT ON MISERY ISLAND.
Y'CAN STOW THAT CASE AT THE REAR...

LOOK, MAMA! LOOK THERE!
IT'S THE BIG SWIM OUT T'MISERY!
SO IT IS. ARE YOU GONNA WAVE TO 'EM?
SURE! HOWDY, ALL YOU SUNK 'UNS! HOWDY!
NOW, RANPHRIL, YOU KNOW BETTER'N TO CALL 'EM THAT...
OH, JUST YOU HUSH, THETTY-JILL. LEAST HE AIN'T CALLIN' 'EM GARGEES. IS THE OLD FEMALE WITH 'EM THIS YEAR?
HEH. EXCUSE ME, BUT WHAT ARE THEY? ARE THOSE SEALS?

UH...
I-I MEAN, PARDON MY IGNORANCE.
I'VE, I'VE NEVER, YOU KNOW, BEEN TO NEW ENGLAND BEFORE, AND...
YUH.
THEY'RE SEALS ALL RIGHT.
OH. WELL, THANKS.
I WAS JUST, YOU KNOW.
JUST WONDERING.
COME ON, GRAMPHY, YOU CAN DO IT! JUST KEEP STRAIGHT ON...
Judge
STRAIGHT ON TO MISERY.
ATHOL
42 MILES
Providence

July 1st

Well, everything's happening at once, I guess. I told Posey I was properly quitting, and for once he was rather good about it. I'm working two weeks' notice, but it will take at least that long to extricate myself from my apartment. Giving up my job and room to plunge into darkest New England... I must admit I'm having doubts and panic about all this, but if it doesn't work out I can just come crawling back without harm, except to my self-esteem. Of course, the other thing today was that, incredibly enough, I hear that Prohibition has been passed. I don't know anyone who thought they'd really do it — although enforcing it's another matter! Then all this stuff with the actors is still bubbling away. The theatre managers formed the Producing Manager's Association a few months back, and then around two weeks ago they said they wouldn't recognise the actor's union, Equity. I don't see where this is going to end except in trouble, although is there an area of American life that isn't on the verge of revolution? Sometimes it sure doesn't seem like it. Oh, and I had a story idea, probably a minor one, about a young man (perhaps in one of the Ancient Kingdoms of the world) who has lost a beloved friend that he sees only in dreams, walking sadly along a dark seashore. Conclusion — the young man vanishes, never to be seen again, but on the floor of his bedchamber there is found sand and seaweed.

July 3rd

Ah, frailty thy name is Robert. I confess that after work last night my baser nature got the better of my pious status as a widower and I decided to survey my usual haunts around Times Square. Out on the prowl, I guess, but it's been weeks now and I'm only human — or at least a close approximation of the same. That there's the kind of slick justification that looks good on paper, but of course it didn't stop me feeling guilty or unfaithful, which put something of a damper on the fun that I'd gone out to have. Oh, well, I got ~~or~~ on pretty famously with a good-looking Irish labourer who I'll admit reminded me of a red-haired and slightly older Tom Malone, at least until he ruined it all by opening his mouth. Dear Lord, but what a bore! I swear if an uncommon thought or word had ever resonated in that vaguely ox-like skull it would have thrown him into seizure. It just served to emphasise that Tom's charm was by no means wholly contained in his undeniably exquisite

looks, but was rather a product of his reading and his genuine poetic nature. I've fondly imagined Tom as someone with whom I could comfortably discuss Yeats and the Celtic Twilight, although I'm sure that I've idly typified him on no more a basis than my own romantic ignorance concerning Ireland. My acquaintance of the other evening, though, Brendan or whatever his name was, would have probably assumed Yeats was a publican and that the Celtic Twilight was his bar! In other areas, though, I must admit he proved sufficient to requirements, and the night wasn't completely wasted. Back in my apartment room — I've told my landlord, Mr. Oswell, that I'm moving out, to which he was apparently indifferent — I was fast asleep the moment that my head collided with the pillow, and on waking up this morning I remembered that I'd had a fragmentary dream: I was beneath an ocean, down there on the seabed although I recall that I was breathing normally, and a well-dressed young fellow with pomaded hair... I think he had some sort of gag tied tight across his mouth that tended to distort his speech in some way... stood there in the sediment and seashells some way off, tending a heaped-up bonfire that was blazing with a fiercely orange flame despite its aqueous location. That was all there was of it, or at least all I can remember, and when I woke up it struck me that the image in the dream reminded me of something. This turned out to be that painting by the great decadent artist Jean Delville, called The Treasures of Satan, which Lily first showed me a reproduction of. It really is the most extraordinary work. The setting of the piece, as in my dream, is what appears to be a curiously fire-lit underwater grotto, where the fallen angel of the title is depicted in volcanic tones of red and gold, standing astride a sensuous lava-flow of molten lovers, languid and lascivious and burning, somehow gathering them up into the folds of the bright scarlet robe that's wound around his arm. The strangest details of Satan's anatomy, however, are the two blood-colored tentacles that grow out of his back: thick, tapering and suction-cup adorned, both trailing lazily as though adrift in a slow current, one curled back between his straddling thighs, the other winding off into the straggling waterweed and coral fronds that are the carpet of this submarine inferno. All this gives me the faint kernel of an idea for a story, not so much my fleeting dreams as the Symbolist painting that might well have been its inspiration. While admittedly the notion as yet doesn't go much further than the central idea in the picture, that of some malefic deity

that's been cast down to an aquatic hell beneath the sea, that is its cold and murky jail, a creature human in its basic form though reminiscent of both octopus and dragon, down there since the Fall in its drowned purgatory. The problem, obviously, is in setting such an outré concept into any manner of intelligible narrative. I doubt that there's a living writer who could do that, and it's certainly far past my own apprentice talents. I frankly don't see how anyone could credibly include such a fantastical conception in a story without utterly unbalancing whatever semblance of reality the idea might conceivably exist in. All that I can think of is perhaps some sort of poem, where the realism of the image wouldn't be an issue, but then unavoidably you'd end up with, at best, a feeble ghost of Milton, wouldn't you? It's an intractable conundrum. Possibly this is the reason why Delville decided to become a painter rather than a litterateur. Some of the images that can boil up out of a human mind are such that they can only be described with form and color, statements in themselves ~~that~~ that need no rationale or explanation. Such things are most probably beyond the reach of words, or anyway beyond the reach of our current vocabulary. Some of the visions of the Symbolists could only be addressed in prose by the creation of a whole new language, or a whole new way of using the one we've already got. Maybe the moderns, Stein or Eliot or somebody like that, will manage it or something like it one day, but for sure it's way beyond my scrawny capabilities. I sometimes think, despite the glaring contradiction, that I'm far too normal for authentic genius.

July 7th

My Irishman last week had a tattoo, which possibly explains the story idea following. What of a tale, possibly somewhat of the nature of Guillaume Apollinaire, where the both decadent and dissolute protagonist chances on some low dive wherein he fatefully encounters a disturbingly wild-eyed and haunted-seeming individual possessing a grotesque and heathenish tattoo upon some visible quarter of his anatomy, let's say on his left arm? Perhaps the tattoo shows the hideous and luridly delineated face of some African Juju spirit, though that is a detail that can be decided later. Having been reluctantly engaged in conversation by this gloomy and doom-laden personage, our louche narrator senses that the tattooed man is making an oblique confession to some awful deed—perhaps even a murder—for which

he believes he's being punished by some horrid supernatural presence that will not relent until it has destroyed him. At first sympathetic to this wretched and apparently delusional victim of circumstance, the character recounting this unsettling yarn takes pity and perhaps gives the unfortunate some money. Though intended charitably, this seems to induce a state of unwanted dependence in the increasingly desperate and increasingly depressing individual. He tracks down our protagonist, as if he has appointed him to the role of a personal saviour, and inflicts more of his progressively delusional misfortunes on our Good Samaritan who's no doubt wishing that he'd kept on walking down the road's far side. Worse still, the source of this fresh agitation is the man's claim that his devilish tattoo has stated to migrate around his body. Eager to show evidence of this the man rolls up his trouser cuff and shows the same monstrous tattoo which once marked his now-bare left arm, adorning his right calf instead. Convinced that the tattoo's a painted fake which can be washed off and then reapplied, and further that he's being taken for a fool, our hero sends the by now hateful character away, despite the man's shrill claims that his demon-tattoo has told him our narrator is the one who will deliver him out of his supernaturally-inflicted torment. He continues to hunt down and seek out our protagonist, who's rapidly becoming sleepless and distraught from the effets of this unceasing and deranged attention. Each time that this occurs the surely-fake tattoo is in a new position on the doomed man's body, until in a last encounter in the night-time alleys by the riverside the devil-mask design is now disfiguring the madman's cheek. Driven at last to desperation and insanity himself by this implacable pursuit, our leading man plunges a dagger or stiletto through the heart of his tattooed tormentor and runs off into the shadows. The denouement of the story comes a few days later. The narrator, anxious lest his crime should be discovered, is relieved to read there in the evening's newspaper that a man's body has been found, stabbed through the heart, but that police admit they have no leads as to the man's assailant, and in light of this will treat the case as closed in absence of fresh evidence. The only thing that puzzles our main character is that the news report has failed to note the diabolical tattoo which covered almost half of the man's face. It's then he notices that the tattoo is now apparently indelibly engraved on his own left arm, with its primitive demonic features leering at him meaningfully. All right, its ghastly touches are a little

heavy-handed and could possibly be said to leave the story open to the worst excesses of the Gothics, but I have to say I'm rather pleased with the above idea. It has beginning, middle and conclusion, and in short seems to possess a shape more durable and sturdy that most of the other half-hearted and incomplete ideas for stories I've presented here. Whether I could expand that pleasing structure from the neat-mowed lawn of a short story to the sprawling jungle of a novel is of course another matter.

July 10th

Had a vague idea which I suppose one might describe as an adverse accompaniment or counterpart to Keats' Endymion (I wonder why all my ideas of late seem to be of a morbid or fantastic bent? Everything's full of horrors. Possibly I'm still in something of a melancholic fit regarding Lillian?), wherein the beautiful and youthful subject of the tale appears to have become beloved by an ethereal and celestially lovely goddess who approaches him in dreams and who implores his love-struck soul to give up mortal life and to reside with her in her own realm. The story then unfolds, much as in Keats' account, but is less blissfully concluded. This strange, immaterial entity is not what she appears, and her enticing human semblance is no more real than the drooping sepals some varieties of plant produce to ape the sexually inviting hind-parts of a bee or pollinating insect. His eternal paradise turns out instead to be a kind of spiritual devouring by an alien and unfathomable being. Too bleak?

July 12th

Character who is beautiful, both in nature and countenance, forced to live amongst grotesque and coarse monsters – I don't have the reasons for this clear in my mind as yet – who takes to disguising himself as one of the monsters for survival reasons, by wearing a hideous mask and adopting loathsome mannerisms. And end of story, he finds he cannot remove mask. He has become what he pretended to be. Title could be "The Dreadful Mask". Or perhaps just "The Mask"?

July 19th

Anxious dream about a train station last night – I'm headed for Salem on Wednesday and it's probably connected up with that – where it was the middle of the night and there was only me and some sort of porter or railway

guard on the premises. I remember the station was completely dark and I was hiding in the washroom because I didn't want this other person to find me. I think I'd heard that there was something wrong with the man's face, and that everyone who saw it died in a train wreck. This made more sense in the dream, and was much more frightening than it sounds. Perhaps this could become a kind of ghost story — some station employee who has been both killed and horribly disfigured in a train accident of some sort, who wants others to share his fate – although other than selfish malice, why would the ghost want to do that? Lonely, possibly?

July 24TH

Actually, I'm sure that it's past midnight now so this is technically Friday the 25th, but I can't be bothered to cross out the above. I'm in my room at the Pequoig Hotel on the corner of Exchange and Main in Athol where I just checked in a half hour ago. The room, in fact the whole hotel, is swell. The most unpleasant thing about the place, much as it pains me to admit, is me. I stink of fish and low tide and I have done ~~ever~~ ever since I got off the bus that brought me here from Salem. I guess I'm still trying to take the whole experience in, but haven't really had the chance to write it all down until now. Let's see – just yesterday (by which I mean the 23rd) I left New York, but only after walking into all the actors picketing on 45th Street when I made my way down to Penn Station from Times Square. It was a real sight, and that was without Bill Fields and Eddie Cantor and the rest, who, I'm told, have been putting on their acts for the theatre lines, persuading people not to go inside. I wish them luck, of course, but then an actors' strike is hardly likely to affect me personally while I'm wading through the backwoods of New England, and I'm not sure that I'd feel the same if it were, say, the fire brigade or the police force who were agitating. I don't think I'd make much of a Bolshevik, if it came down to it.

The journey to New England seemed to take a long time, but the scenery was wonderful... until we got to Salem. I don't mean to run the place down, but I understand they had a fire just a few years back and as we came through the main part of the town there were still ugly, burned-out buildings and a great abundance of construction sites. Obviously, it's always going to be upsetting seeing somewhere in the wake of a disaster, but as my local bus pulled into a big semi-circular enclosure backing onto the North

River waterfront, a place hardly touched in the 1914 fire, it was somehow much worse. The area is just so shabby and run-down, with damp in all the timbers and a lingering fish smell everywhere, as if the place and all the people in it have been left to rot.

And speaking of the people... I checked in at the old Hillman Hotel, right there on the crescent. The hotel was pretty much a dump, although I've stayed in far worse places, but that pales to insignificance beside my first glimpse of Zeke Hillman (and, yes, he was actually called Zeke), the dump's proprietor. When he stepped out into the lobby after I'd arrived I almost laughed, or screamed, or maybe came close to attempting both at once. It was his face—I later learned that nearly everybody on the waterfront has the same look as a result of an influx of South Sea island immigrants during the eighteen-hundreds: no chin and a sloping forehead, tiny little ears and flattened nose, eyes that look as if there's space for two more eyes between them, hardly any hair—at least not on the men—and just about the biggest feet I've ever seen. He really was the darndest-looking individual.

After I'd checked in I found my way out to the Boggs gold refinery across North River that I'd heard about from Suydam, where I met with Mr. Tobit Boggs and some unusual friends of his who were just leaving. One of them, an ancient-looking man from Marblehead called Increase Orne who collects little bottles with small weights hanging inside, had the most terrible demeanour, while the other—Shadrach something—was a big and bear-like old man who, despite a few off-color comments, seemed to have a strong physical interest in me. Apparently he's acted oddly since he had his home up in the Naumkeag valley hit by lightning in the 1890s, but I swear, the way he looked at me it was as if he'd like to just gobble me up—and who's to say that I'd have minded?

When they'd gone, I got to talk to Mr. Boggs—another Salem face much like Zeke Hillman's—and he told me more about the "Stella Sapiente" order Suydam mentioned. It seems they're still going! Boggs spoke about Hali's Book, although he hasn't seen a copy personally. He told me that when he acquired the transcript Dr. Alvarez had asked for, he had an associate named Garland Wheatley from right here in Athol copy out the manuscript, although apparently the Wheatleys cut off contact with the order back in 1912. There was something about a stone in 1882, but I confess that Boggs' voice

was so thick and so congested that there were a lot of things I didn't catch.

One odd thing, now I think about it — Suydam had apparently sent Boggs a postcard telling him about me, not excluding my embarrassing fiasco down in Suydam's cellar, and when Boggs later introduced me to his wife (disturbingly voluptuous and named, if you can credit it, "Negathlia-Lou") as "the Herald fellow", I assumed that Suydam must have told him who I worked for, although looking back I thought I'd kept my journalist credentials quiet when I was interviewing Suydam. I suppose I must have let the stuff about the Herald slip when I was still recovering from being gassed and babbling who knows what nonsense to Suydam and Gerritsen. I really am a perfect ass.

Boggs showed me the whole district. There's a church here called St. Jude's though everybody hereabouts pronounces it "St. Joad's", and a Masonic hall that's been converted for the use of something called "Friends of Oannes". Something rather disagreeable was our discovery outside the church of a drawn symbol — a sort of hooked cross that Boggs referred to as a "fill-foot" — that was an offensive daub deliberately perpetrated by Salem's more respectable townspeople, who are worried about being swamped by South-Sea halfbreeds You could almost make a story out of it.

At my crummy hotel that night I had the strangest dream, too long to write down here, in which someone called me "a Marblehead". I don't know why, but that made me think that 'Marblehead' might be a good working title for my proposed book. It's just such an evocative word.

Today I had to wait around all day before the evening bus to Athol came, and when it did it soon filled up with Salem faces like a giant can of sardines. It made for an uncomfortable bus-journey, though I saw some seals just off the shore, big seals swimming by night, which was a real scene of natural beauty. The desk clerk here at the Pesquoig, a pretty brunette, says there's a library recently opened down the street, which may be a good place to start my hunt for the Wheatley family tomorrow morning, although right now I'm ready for bed. I include a copy of the St. Jude's Parish Newsletter I picked up in Salem, which I've not had time to read too closely — they call it "Joad's Codes", presumably because of all the typing errors, like the misspelling of "fishers of men" on the cover — just to give the flavour of the place, which, in my estimation, is most probably not far removed from pickled herring.

Church of St. Jude's

PARISH NEWSLETTER

AND HE SAITH UNTO THEM, COME YE AFTER ME, AND
I WILL MAKE YOU FISHES OF MEN. MATTHEW 4: 19.

The Parish Church of Saint Jude,
138 Bridge Street, Salem, Mass.

June - August, 1919

Whelcome to this sumer edition of our news-letter, wich I should lake to commence with an passage from the Gaspel according to Saint Joad itself, wherein it is writen "And his Mother was Mery, who is of the Sea, and he did dwel amongst the fisshur-men in Gililee beside the waters there. And men did sea his eyes that were like unto two ponds haveing an wide path set there between them. And then lekewise they did sea his feet that were made like unto the blades of paddles. And the hair upon him, even on the face of him, was as a fine weed. And they said, He hath aboat him an Oannes look. For of the sign whereby men knew him and knew those who followed after him, it was an fish, and many were the things he did. When was an hungry multitude with nought save loaves of bread then he did bring them fishes in aboundense so that they were wel fed and men said, Great is his God that gives us fishes when our gods reward us not at all so that we starve. And when he made to walk upon the Sea at Gililee, leviathans did rise from out the deeps beneath his heels and bore him up so that he was not sinken, that all men should know he was his Father's son. And yet they knew him not, and cursed him, for they said that he was lake unto the idel of the Philistines. They stripped him of his garment and the scales were fallen from their eyes for they said, See, he is not of a kind to us. And they said, Let us thake him out and hang him upon hooks that he may cure. Yet many tides did not pass before he was risen from his slab and was descended unto Heaven, through black abysses to dwell amidst wonder and glory for ever."

These are fin words, and as true now as when they were writen. They remind us, as we striggle in the nets and pots of this earthy domain, that our Father watches under all his shoal and keeps us safe from all the lures and baits and gaudy insects with wich the dry devil seeks to tempt us, or else lead us into

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wracklessness and ruin. I have seen the Old Signs made outside our church, and whaile they are an grievous provocation, I mist urge you all to venture no retailiations. For is it not writen that the smallest fry shall be delivered to the promised no land, on that day when all earth shall be ended? There shall shorely come a mighty Rupture, from where all the faithful shall rise up to their reward and great Oannes, with the least fan of His tail, shall brush the surface clean of infestations so that as the world was once, yet shall it be again. I am remonded of an joke, wich is an word arrangement that is wrong and foolish and is meant to bring pleaseure by trickling the mind. Once there were fisshur-men, more than one but less than many, and the names of them were Jawn Close-eyes and Jawn Little-foot. They are waddling together like white-belly ice-birds in the shalow airs beside the mocean when there on the dry sand at their feet, Jawn Close-eyes sees the thing to eat that all men take most pleaseure in. It is, of course, the pink boiled sex-stick of a dog wrapped up in bread. Jawn Close-eyes and Jawn Little-foot cannoot resist it and they fall down on their faces as they try to get it in their anus-like small mouths at the same time. But, and here is the best part of my joke, there are paintill hooks inside the sex-stick of the dog that pierce their skinny lips, and Jawn Close-eyes and Jawn Little-foot are dregged into the water. Before they are drowned completely, blades are pushed into their bellies and their guts are then pulled out. Jawn Close-eyes, whaile he flaps his last, says to Jawn Little-foot "Well, this is the yh'naghu of what I expected." That is the end of my joke. The reason that we may take pleaseure from an word arrangement such as this is that yh'naghu, wich means opposite, is similar as an sound made through air to the word yh'nak'hu, wich means the cutting and eating of men. Whaile I did not at first understaind this myself, if it is repeated many times by voice and in air, it may lead to an noise that is not voluntary and is not itself an unpleaseant thing.

To be more serious, there soon will be new roe on Misery and after that Saint Joad's will hold its annual baptizing, for the times of which you are diwrected to the notices below by our church-warden Miss Mithathalia-Su Wade. Until our fell edition in Septumber, I hope to be seeing more of you at our waekly serfices and remember that Oannes keeps you safe within his mouth.

Your pastor,

The Reverend Eli Hillman

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NOTICES

The Parish Church of Saint Jude would luke to thank Mr. Tobit Boggs for his gemerous donation of the Reverend Hillman's new golden mitre, to replaice the pervious one stolen by vandals, purporping to be a Historical Society.

In tidings from other waters, Mr. Jonah Seely has resieved news from his reelatives that recent upheavals of the bed, wich coincided with the Great Dry Cull between 1914 and 1918, would seem to have once more seddled into inactivity. However, Mr. Seely also makes report that some of the minowr temples, more than one but less than many, are still left uncovered.

Mr. Malachi Finney of the Friends of Oannes wushes to announce that since the recent going dowrn of former Grand Eel Mr. Leviticus Culp, Mr. Forbearance Wade has been promoted to that office from his former grade as Master of False Lights. An new Master of False Lights will be appointed by an shell-ballot on Subnday, 8th of June, at the Friends of Oannes Lodge, 114 Bridge Street, where Mrs. Lululetha-Flo Finney will serve her famous kelp-biscuits.

On the evening of Tuegsday, 17th of June, in Saint Jude's church hall, Mr. Justify and Mrs. Ishanashil-Rae Cuttle will deliver an talk upon encounters between Viking vishitors to this continent and Mrs. Cuttle's auncestor, the dowager lady Urugathru-Bee, who will herself be present to answer questions. Those of you who remember the dowager lady's pervious visit to Salem, when she spoake of her youth amongst the man-herders along the old Bering bridge, will know to expect an lively night!

Thirsday, 17th of July, is the fingers-many year birth-feast of Joseph Beecher, son of Mr. Erasmus and Mrs. Pepethelle-Cora Beecher, when he will become mature. The shedding and removal of the infant sex-stick will take plaice with ceremony at Saint Jude's before the sun is risen, where Joseph's female reelatives will present him with the customery gifts of shark teeth and cutlasses. The Beechers respictfully ask that all guests should wear blue, in honor of the occasion.

I should not neade to remonde you that the following waek on Thirsday, 24th of July, with the last light of the waning moon before the black mother-moon, there is the rut on Misery. We dew not wish an recurrence of what happened last year, and not oanly the Reverend Hillman but as well Mr. Forbearance Wade, Worshippful Grand Eel of the Friends, have insisted that there is to be no ilcohol consumed before the island is put to orgy. The gentlemen are remonded that the breaking off of the sex-stick inside to thwart other maters is no lunger encouraged, as it is not thought to ensure certainty of progeny as once was the case, and may be no more than an foolish superstition.

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Following the hatchings in the seasons-many week of August, at Saint Jude's on Muunday, 25th August we shael have our baptisings with the barbed hook-moon, after wich the misborn may in good conscience be commendaed to the bosom of Oannes.

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Finally, the Reverend Hillman and myseelf would like to present some more of the remainiscences of one of our community's most constant man-freinds, Mr. Annesley. These fond memories of our town's past have been writen dowrn by Mrs. Negathlia-Lou Boggs when she was present dewring one of Mr. Annesley's visits to her hussband, Mr. Tobit Boggs.

"Well, now, the first of it for me was '42 or thenabouts. I'd knowed Jack Boggs since he were first become an captain, when he sought us out after he'd heard of my amusements back when I sailed for old Colwen. I were still a part of it with all them conjurors and their old booke in them days. You take that Miss Massey, I knew her as many of us boys did and would spend some times with her if she were down from Tyng's Town or Derryfield, whatever they was calling the Amoskeag falls in them times. Mr. Rooly, I knowed him as well, brought him and Mrs. Rooly over to Rhode Island when I worked for Colwen. Anyway, old Jack, he'd got a tickle for the magic and he soon got made one of the order, and I think his first mate Silas Wade was taken in around that time as well although my memories ain't necessarily reliable since I was lightning-struck in '96. The upshot of it all was that when Jack seed that old Wisdom of the Stars book, he read for himself about them islands in the South Seas and all of the business what went on there.

"That book is a curiosity, in so much as it seems whatever it may be a fellow's looking for within it, there he'll find it, plain as daylight. For my own part, I acquired an appetite for reading it after I'd heard from Japheth Colwen's own lips what were in it, about the four paths around the graveyard and the rest of it. As I recall, some of the pages was about a method what required considerable ice and for that reason was not hardly practicable. Other writings was about revitalising them what's passed either with fluids or a preparation of their powders, and there was other items what concerned the putting elsewhere of a fellow's essence, whether it be in an other person or inside what you might think of as an battery made out from glass and lead, such as some bottles of an old sort I have witnessed. Having never had no aptitude for witching and the like, I was inclined to several passages what said that healthy eating was the secret to an long and happy life, which I have found it out to be. Once having satisfied my hungriness for knowing matters, I confess to taking little interest in the other substance of the book ad when my membership and privileges was took off me after what they said was massacre.

"Anyways, in '41 or '42 I think it was, Jack lights out for

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them islands and he comes back with old Tobit's grandma, Miss Pathithia-Lee. I was the first one what he thought to introduce her to, although now that I come to think it might have been old Increase Orne from Marblehead was likewise present there on that occasion. She was such an pretty little thing, I'd never seed the like. Ever since then, it's been amongst my habits to come down the valley and pay my respects to the fine people here, and there have been times when we've been right helpful with each other. When there was that ruckus what got blamed on plague in '46, that would be an example right enough, although it was that what made the Wise and Starry fellows say as they weren't having any more associating with the Salem waterside folks, nor me neither.

"I know you'll have heard about that time, when old Jack and his boys was locked up in the brig and there were nobody to see as them folks out past Misery was fed. From what I heard of all what followed, it were a right lively time in the old town so afterwards they had to make out it were pox or cholera, I don't recall which one it was, as done all of them people under. I remember there was an whole party what got out when all the culling was afoot, best part of two families what with the childern, and they'd got some notion of alerting regulators and the like about all what was happening in Salem. Now, you'll think its comical, but they was fleeing out from Salem under cover of the night and making they way up the valley, and I swan you fellows' idol, old Oannes, he was looking out for all his people. Must have been, for all those folks what had escaped, he leads them up the Naumkeag to my cabin where they's looking to find they salvation. Well, I had some fun then, you may count on it. I suppose as it were sinful, how I drew it out for them, but Lord it give me quite an tickle and it were an month before the last of them was et or salted for the Winter.

"Since that time, I have powerful enjoyed an friendship with you waterside folks what's been of considerable benefit to both parties concerned, like, you remember, Tobit, when that revenuer boy come up from Boston wanting to know all about what's done at the refinery? He was the one what kept up crying for his mother all the while when I was doing it, and where I give you and Negathlia-Lou half them black puddens what I made. It's been some good old times what we've had here in Salem, and I'm looking forward to a hundred or two more of such things."

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The Church of Saint Jude's would luke to thank Mr. Annesley for his whelcome recollections, and to remonde parishioners that Scunday services will be suspended for the month of July to allow suffishent time in making preparation for the rut.

The next eadition of this perioddical will be made available on Satorday, 6th of Septumber , with all contributions to be ready by Scunday, 31st of August. I shall look forward to saeing you all then.

Mithathalia-Su Wade (Miss), church-warden.

CHAPTER 4

"On Thursday evening Munn
came down to dinner in his
Essex Roadster & afterward
took Cook & me on a trip
to one of the finest scenic
spots I have ever seen—
Bear's Den, in the woods
south west of Athol."

—To Lillian D. Clark
July 1st, 1928

"'COURSE, THEY SAY INBREEDING STARTS WHERE THE GOOD *ROAD* RUNS OUT, YOU EVER HEAR THAT?
"COUNTRY PEOPLE, THEY GOT A DIFFERENT IDEA O' *TIME*, LAZING AROUND ALL DAY. THEY DON'T SEE THINGS HOW WE DO OR BEHAVE BY DECENT *STANDARDS*."

ASK *ME*, LIVING OUT IN THE WILDS LIKE THAT, MOST OF 'EM ARE NO BETTER'N NIGGERS.
THERE. IS THAT SINGE GOOD ENOUGH, OR YOU WANT A LITTLE MORE?
NO. NO, THAT'S FINE HOW IT IS.
BARBER'S
EST 1898
RUM
IV: WHITE APES

BARBERS
EST 1898
YOU'RE THE BOSS.
SO, YOU WAS SAYING YOU COME ALL THE WAY TO TOOL TOWN FROM NEW YORK, LOOKING TO FIND SOME LOCAL HAYSEEDS?
SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE RUNNING SHORT OF SIMPLETONS BACK *HOME.*
HA HA! NO, WE'VE GOT PLENTY. IT WAS A SPECIFIC FAMILY I'D HOPED TO TRACE IN ATHOL, NAME OF *WHEATLEY.*
A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME I SHOULD TALK TO THEM ABOUT A *BOOK* I MEAN TO WRITE.
I'VE BEEN IN ATHOL A WEEK, AT THE PEQUOIG HERE ON MAIN, BUT NOBODY CAN TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT THEM.
WELL, MAYBE THEY CAN'T, OR MAYBE THEY WON'T.
I'M GUESSING YOU'RE AFTER FINDING WARLOCK WHEATLEY.
HIM AND HIS IMBECILE FAMILY GOT ONE OF THE OLD FARMS ON CASS MEADOW, OUT NORTH ORANGE ROAD.
TO BE TRUTHFUL, THEY'RE POOR AS DIRT, AND NOBODY ROUND HERE THINKS MUCH OF 'EM.
HOW'S THAT LOOKING TO YOU?
IT LOOKS GOOD. AND THIS IS *GARLAND* WHEATLEY WE'RE TALKING ABOUT? PEOPLE CALL HIM *WARLOCK?*
EST 1898
HUH. THEY CALL HIM WORSE THAN THAT WHEN THEY'VE A MIND. IT'S 'CAUSE HE GOES ON LIKE HE'S SOME *MEDICINE MAN.*
HEAD DOWN MAIN TO THE BRIDGE AND IT'S ABOUT A MILE PAST LOWER VILLAGE CEMETERY. WASTE OF TIME, O' COURSE, BUT THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS.
INCIDENTALLY, THE HAIRCUT'LL COST YOU A QUARTER.

BARBERS
...IN ROOM 215. WELCOME TO THE PEQUOIG.
AS FOR YOUR ENQUIRIES, I'M NEW TO ATHOL MYSELF. I KNOW LAROY STARRETT'S TOOL COMPANY IS THE BIGGEST EMPLOYER, BUT THAT'S ABOUT IT.
LAST YEAR, THOUGH, STARRETT PAID FOR A LIBRARY OPPOSITE SCHOOL STREET, JUST DOWN THE WAY.
YOU COULD TRY THERE TOMORROW, WHEN THEY'RE OPEN...
...WHEATLEYS WEREN'T ONE OF THE FIRST FIVE FAMILIES TO SETTLE PEQUOIG, LIKE THE SMITHS OR MORTONS. THEY ARRIVED LATER, FROM SALEM.
THERE ARE PLENTY OF WHEATLEYS IN ATHOL TODAY, AND FINE UPSTANDING CITIZENS THEY ARE. SOME BRANCHES OF THE FAMILY TREE, HOWEVER, WERE...
WELL, BLIGHTED. I DON'T THINK THAT'S TOO STRONG A TERM.

BLIGHTED? IN WHAT WAY?
BLOODLINES CAN DEGENERATE OVER TIME. INTELLECTUALLY, MORALLY... EVEN PHYSICALLY.
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND; PARTS OF ATHOL ARE VERY SECLUDED. THE ATMOSPHERE CAN BE OPPRESSIVE OUT AMONG THOSE ROUND-TOPPED HILLS.
IT'S THE TOWN'S HISTORY: LOTS OF BLOODY SKIRMISHES WITH REDSKINS, SCALPINGS AND THE LIKE. IT'S SEEN PLENTY OF GRIEVING.
I THINK THE PAST GETS IN THE MARROW OF A PLACE, AND MAYBE OF ITS PEOPLE LIKEWISE.
I DON'T KNOW THIS GARLAND WHEATLEY YOU'RE AFTER, AND IF HE'S FROM DECLINING STOCK, I DON'T WANT TO.
NEITHER SHOULD YOU, I'D HOPE. THE WAY SOME OF THESE PEOPLE LIVE...
WELL, IT'S NOTHING TO SHOUT ABOUT.

WHEATLEY

I WAS YOU, I'D STAND OFF FROM IT.
IN THERE'S WHERE THE SLAUGHTERIN' GETS DONE.

OH... LOOK, I'M REAL SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO INTRUDE. W-WOULD YOU BE GARLAND WHEATLEY?
HUH HUH. NOT FOR ALL THE CUNT WHAT'S IN CONNECTICUT IF I'D GOT ANY SAY IN MATTERS, WHICH APPARENTLY I DON'T.
OCCURS TO ME THE QUESTION'S MORE WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE IN THE GENERAL SCHEME O' THINGS.
M-MY NAME'S ROBERT BLACK. I'M A JOURNALIST WRITING A BOOK ABOUT NEW ENGLAND.
I-I WAS IN SALEM, WITH TOBIT BOGGS. HE SUGGESTED I CONTACT YOU. AND ZEKE HILLMAN AT THE HOTEL SAID TO SEND HIS BEST...
HUH HUH. THAT WALL-EYED BASTARD OWES ME THIRTY BUCKS.
YOU KNOW YOU'RE STANDIN' IN BLOOD?
WHAT DO YOU M... AH, HELL!
YEAH.
LIVIN' OUT IN THE COUNTRY, BLOOD FIGURES IN MOST THINGS. A MAN'S FAMILY, A MAN'S LIVESTOCK, IT'S ALL HE'S GOT.
THAT'LL COME OFF WHILE WE'RE WALKIN'. YOU CAN TELL ME WHY THEM SALEM BOYS THOUGHT I'D BE CONCERNED OVER THIS BOOK O' YOURS.
UM... SURE.
SEE, MY WRITING, IT'S ABOUT A WHOLE DIFFERENT SIDE OF AMERICA, LIKE A COUNTERPART NOBODY SEES OR KNOWS IS THERE.
I WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN SOMETHING CALLED HALI'S BOOKE THAT MR. BOGGS SAID YOU'D COPIED FOR HIM ONCE...
HUH. AIN'T SEEN THAT SINCE 1912, WHEN MY PRIVILEGES WAS TOOK AWAY.

SEE, THIS SOCIETY I BELONGED TO GIVE SAINT ANSELM COLLEGE IN MANCHESTER A COPY O' THE BOOK AROUND 1890.
THAT WAS WHEN THEY WAS HAVIN' ALL THEIR BIG IDEAS.
ANYWAYS, WE HAD A FALLIN' OUT. THEY DON'T ALLOW ME IN THEIR LIBRARY NOW.
UH, I HEARD ABOUT SOME GROUP CALLED THE STELLA SAPIENTE...
THAT'S THE VERY SONS O' BITCHES WHAT I'M TALKIN' ABOUT.
THERE'D BEEN WHEATLEYS IN THE STELL SAPS SINCE MY THRICE-GREAT GRANPAPPY, SIXTEEN-NINETY SOMETHIN'. NOT THAT THEY HADN'T ALLUS LOOKED DOWN ON US, MIND.
IT'S LIKE WHEN THEY BRUNG THAT STONE DOWN, '82, THEN TOOK IT FOR 'EMSELVES.
SORRY, WHAT STONE WAS THAT?
OH, IT WAS SOME ASTRONOMICAL NONSENSE WHAT NEEDN'T CONCERN YOU.
POINT IS, THEY BRUNG IT DOWN OUTSIDE MANCHESTER ON FARMIN' LAND. AIN'T LIKE THEY CARE WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE HARVEST.
THEN, 'FORE I COULD SEE, THEY SPIRITS IT OFF TO RHODE ISLAND, CLAIMIN' AS HOW IT'S JUST EVAPORATED.
THEY WERE SHUTTING YOU OUT?
GOES WITHOUT SAYIN'. ALL THE BLUE-BLOODS, OLD WADE AND WHAT'S-HIS-NAME, GENERAL PIKE'S ASSOCIATE, THEY'D GOT THEIR OWN PLANS FOR THE ORDER.
THEY WANTED TO FULFILL THE REDEEMER PROPHECY IS WHAT IT WAS, AN' US POOR RELATIONS WASN'T CONSULTED. THIS WAS 1889, APPROXIMATE.
THE REDEEMER PROPHECY, THAT'S FROM HALI'S BOOK...

THAT IT IS. YOU'VE DONE YOUR READIN', I CAN TELL. THE REDEEMER'S THE FELLER GONNA PUT THE WORLD *RIGHT* AGAIN.
WADE AND THEM DECIDED IT'D BE ONE O' THEIR *OWN.* RIGHT AFTER THAT, THEY GIVE THE ARAB'S BOOK TO SAINT *ANSELM.*
RECKON THEY WAS *DONE* WITH IT.
SO, YOU WANTED THE BOOK YOURSELF...?
HELL, NO. COLLEGE DIDN'T EITHER, AFTER THE '92 FIRE. BURNED PLENTY O' BOOKS, BUT NEVER TOUCHED *HALI'S.* NO, IT WAS THE *HIGH-HANDEDNESS* OFFENDED ME.
I'M A BETTER CUNNIN'-FELLER THAN WHAT *THEY* ARE. WHY DON'T I GET TO DECIDE? TWENTY *YEARS* WE WAITED FOR THEIR EXPERIMENT TO WORK OUT.
WHEN IT *DIDN'T,* I PUT MY *OWN* PROPOSAL FORWARD. 1912, THAT WERE, AND THEY STRAIGHT AWAY EXPELS ME AN' MY DAUGHTER *LETTY* FROM THE SOCIETY.
SOUNDS LIKE PETTY *PREJUDICE* TO ME. MR. BOGGS IN SALEM SAID PRETTY MUCH THE SAME THING ABOUT HIM AND *HIS* RELATIVES GETTING THE COLD SHOULDER.
I MEAN, I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE OCCULT, BUT I'D HAVE THOUGHT SERIOUS PHILOSOPHERS SHOULD BE *ABOVE* ALL THAT.
'COURSE THEY SHOULD! THEY TALK ABOUT DISTANT *STARS* AN' ETERNITY'S *DEPTHS* AN' HOW MAN AIN'T *NOTHIN',* THOUGH RESPECTABLE SOCIETY *IS,* SEEMS LIKE.
MAYBE YOU OUGHTTA MEET MY FAMILY AND JUDGE US FOR *YOURSELF.*

LOOK, I DON'T WANT TO INTRUDE MORE THAN I ALREADY *HAVE.* MAYBE I SHOULD JUST HEAD BACK TO *ATHOL...*
NO, I SHAN'T HEAR OF IT. YOU'RE WRITIN' A BOOK, I WANT YOU SHOULD SEE *OUR* SIDE TO THE STORY.
'SIDES, IT'D BE A TREAT FOR LETTY, MEETIN' SOME NEW BLOOD.
SHE'S DREADFUL *ISOLATED.*
SO, UH, DID YOUR WIFE, DID MRS. WHEATLEY PASS AWAY...?
WELL, GETTIN' FOUND WITH ALL HER BONES BROKE LIKE SHE'D BEEN PICKED UP AN' DROPPED, YOU CALL THAT PASSIN' AWAY THEN I GUESS SHE DID.
HAPPENED RIGHT AFTER I'D OBJECTED TO THE ORDER CREATIN' THEIR OWN *REDEEMER.*
HELL OF A YEAR, 1890.
AND AFTER ALL YOU'D BEEN THROUGH, THE ORDER *ABANDONED* YOU? YOU COULDN'T EVEN LOOK AT HALI'S BOOK IN ST. ANSELM'S *LIBRARY?*
NOPE. BEIN' BENEFACTORS, THE STELL SAPS GOT INFLUENCE. ALSO, ANSELM COLLEGE IS A *CATHOLIC* AFFAIR, LIKE THE SOCIETY'S RHODE ISLAND CHURCH.
I FIGURE WADE'S CRONIES POSSIBLY HAVE SOME PULL IN THEM QUARTERS.
THEN YOU'RE COMPLETELY CUT OFF FROM THE WHOLE *OUTFIT,* I GUESS. JUST YOU AND YOUR DAUGHTER...
NEAR ENOUGH, ALTHOUGH O' COURSE THERE'S LETTY'S OFFSPRING. WHO CAN TELL? COULD BE US WHEATLEYS GETS THE LAST LAUGH OVER THEM GENTLEFOLK AN' THEIR *REDEEMER.*
LETICIA? YOU IN THE HOUSE, DARLIN'? WE GOT US A *VISITOR...*

RECKON I'M IN HERE, DADDY.
'COURSE Y'ARE, SWEETHEART. YOU'RE DOIN' YOUR FIGURIN' OUT, AIN'T THAT RIGHT?
MR. BLACK, THIS IS MY GIRL LETICIA. LETTY, THIS HERE'S MR. BLACK. HE'S GONNA WRITE A ***BOOK***.
PLEASED T'MEETCHA, MR. BLACK. IS WE GONNA BE IN YOUR STORY?
WELL, IT'S MORE OF A... I MEAN, SURE. YOU'D BE PERFECT.
I KNEW YOU'D GET ALONG. LISTEN, I'M GONNA LEAVE YOU YOUNGSTERS TALKIN' WHILE I LOOK FOR THE BOY, SO'S HE CAN MEET MR. BLACK, TOO.
BUT HE'S... OH. YOU MEAN WILLARD. I DON'T KNOW WHERE ***HE'S*** GONE.
BUT WHERE'S MY MANNERS? PRAY, TAKE YOURSELF A STOOL...
RIGHT. THANK YOU, MRS... UH, MISS WHEATLEY.

I'LL BE BACK PRESENTLY. UNLESS WILLARD'S OFF UP IN THE HILLS AGAIN, HE'LL MOST LIKELY BE ABOUT HIS STUDYIN'.
ANYTHIN' YOU'RE NEEDIN', MR. BLACK, YOU TELL LETICIA. SHE'S A BRIGHT SPARK AND CAPABLE O' MOST THINGS YOU ASK HER.
OH, AND DON'T BE GOIN' UPSTAIRS NOW, WILLYA? WE'RE *RENOVATIN'*.
UM... FINE. WHATEVER YOU SAY.
WELL, THIS IS...
THIS IS A REAL NICE PLACE. AND YOU'RE HAVING RENOVATIONS DONE, I GATHER?
WHAT, YOU MEAN UPSTAIRS?
THAT'S FOR THE BOY. HOW THEY *GROW*, AN' ALL. HE'S GETTIN' TOO BIG FOR THE SHED. SHOULDA DONE IT YEARS BACK...
THE BOY. SO THAT'S... *WILLARD*, WAS IT?
OH.
UH... YEAH. YEAH, WILLARD.
LORD, WHAT DID I SAY? I DIDN'T SAY *JOHN-DIVINE* DID I?

UH... NO. NO, I DON'T BELIEVE SO. JOHN-DIVINE, IS THAT ANOTHER NAME YOU HAVE FOR...?
NO! NO, IT AIN'T. JOHN-DIVINE AIN'T NOTHIN' AT ALL.
WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE BOOK WHAT YOU'RE DOIN' WHILE I SIT QUIET AN' LISTEN?
IS IT GONNA HAVE PICTURES IN IT?
WELL, ACTUALLY, MY BOOK WAS GOING TO BE MORE THE KIND THAT...
IT OUGHTER HAVE PICTURES. PEOPLE LIKE PICTURES, FOR WHEN READIN' MAKES 'EM TIRED.
YOU WANTED, YOU COULD PUT ONE O' MINE IN THERE, FROM WHEN I DOES MY FIGURIN' OUT.
HERE, YOU TAKE IT. DADDY SAYS AS I'M GONNA BE FAMOUS.
LOOK, I DON'T REALLY... NO. NO, THANK YOU, LETICIA. THAT'S VERY KIND. I'LL TRY TO USE IT, I PROMISE.
SO, UM, I MEAN, I'M NOT PRYING, BUT DO YOU STILL SEE THE BOY'S FATHER MUCH...?
WHAT, YOU MEAN HIM? NO.
NOBODY SEES THE BOYS' FATHER, 'CEPTIN' THAT ONE TIME.
OH. YOU MEAN WHEN YOU, UM...
IT WAS UP BY THE SENTINEL ELM OFF MOORE HILL ROAD, WHAT'S FURTHER ALONG NORTH ORANGE.
TELL THE TRUTH, MY OWN RECOLLECTION'S GOT BITS MISSIN' FROM IT. THAT'S WHY I DOES MY FIGURIN' OUT.
AIN'T NO USE ASKIN' DADDY, NEITHER. HE SAYS HE TRULY DON'T REMEMBER NOTHIN'...

UH, WAIT A MINUTE... YOU'RE SAYING YOUR FATHER, THAT MR. WHEATLEY WAS PRESENT WHEN...?
WELL, NOW, HE WAS AND HE WEREN'T, KIND OF.
WHAT *I* THINK, DADDY WAS LIKE ONE O' THEM *SYRINGES* WHAT THEY HAVE FOR THE INSEMINATIN' NOWADAYS...
YOU KNOW. HOW WHEN THE BULL AIN'T GONNA MOUNT THE COW PROPER?
THAT'S HOW HE WORKED *DADDY*.
I JUST REMEMBER IT WAS JUNE THAT NIGHT WE WENT UP THE HILL. ALL THE *FLOWERS* WAS GROWED, AN' THE *NIGHTJARS*, THEY WAS CALLIN'.
DADDY WAS SAYIN' "WE'LL SHOW 'EM. WE'LL SHOW 'EM, MY LITTLE WHITE ROSE." HE'D CALL ME THAT.
"WE'LL SHOW THEM STUCK-UP BASTARDS."
THEN THERE'S A BIT WHAT I DON'T *REMEMBER*, AND THEN I AIN'T GOT NO *CLOTHES* ON AND DADDY IS MAKIN' THE *ANGLES*.
THEN *HE'S* THERE, AN' IT'S *HAPPENIN'*, AN' I AIN'T *DONE* IT BEFORE.
HE WAS... JUST BIG *BALLS*, YOU KNOW? JUST HANGIN' THERE...
IT WAS *FIREWORKS*, LIKE WHAT THEY SAY IN BOOKS.
THE LOVE...
FIREWORKS RIGHT UP TO THE *SKY*.

THERE. SORRY IT TOOK ME SO LONG. WILLARD'S IN HIS HIDEOUT, SCHOOLIN' AT MATHEMATICS. HE SAYS HE'LL SEE YOU.
THERE'S A LITTLE PATH ACROSS THE YARD, OPPOSITE WHERE YOU COME IN. HE'S DOWN THAT WAY.
I'LL... I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
APPEARS HE'S GOT ONE OF HIS QUEER HUMORS ON HIM TODAY, SO DON'T LET HIM *RILE* YOU NONE.
HE'S A GOOD ENOUGH BOY. HE JUST AIN'T RIGHT SOCIAL. COMES FROM NOT HAVIN' ANY PLAYMATES HIS OWN *SIZE*, I SHOULDN'T WONDER.
RIGHT. RIGHT, I'LL REMEMBER THAT. THANK YOU.

AH KNOWS YUR THERE.
MAHT UZ WELL COME IN.

UM, HOW DO YOU DO? IT'S WILLARD, AM I RIGHT?
MY NAME'S ROBERT. I'M...
AH KNOWS WHO YU ARE, RAHT ENUFF. YUR THE HERALD-MAN. NAOW SAY WHUT YU WANT, UN' LET ME DO MAH STUDYIN' IN PEACE.
T'DAY, WHUT AHM MOS'LY DOIN' IS TESS'RACTS, UN' THEY'S TRICKY DIVELS BEST O' TAHMS.
ATHOL

WELL, I USED TO BE A HERALD MAN, YOU'RE RIGHT, BUT I GUESS I'M DOING OTHER WORK NOW.
SO, TESSERACTS, DID YOU SAY? AND THAT'S TO DO WITH MATHEMATICS?
I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE NOT IN COLLEGE, A SMART YOUNG MAN OF YOUR AGE.
AHM NEAR ON SIX UN' A HAFF.
TESS'RACTS IS JUST BOXES WHUT'S GUT BIG AHDEAS. YU TAKES A BOX UN' UNFOLDS IT, YU'R GONNUH HEV SIX SQUAYUHS, AIN'T THET RAHT?
TESS'RACTS IS THE SAME, SAVIN' THEY UNFOLDS INTUH EIGHT BOXES. ENNY FOOL KNOWS THET.
SURE. SURE, I-I GUESS THEY DO.
STILL, YOU, UH, YOU MUST GET LONELY UP HERE SOMETIMES WITHOUT PEOPLE YOUR OWN AGE TO TALK TO.
I MEAN, YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR, UH, YOUR GRANDFATHER, THEY SEEM LIKE REAL NICE PEOPLE, BUT EVEN SO...
THEY'S A HINDRANCE, THUH BOTH OF 'UM. ON'Y REASON THEY'S HEEYUH IS CUZ IT'S HAOW THE STORY'S GOTTA BE.
IN THE 'DEEMER STORY, S'GOTTA BE THUH CRAZY GRANPAPPY, UN' THUH WHAHT-FACED WUMMUN, UN' THUH BAD-LOOKIN' BWOY.
THET'S WHAH AH AIN'T WARMIN' TUH YU. YUR AHT UV A DIFF'RUN' STORY AWLDUHGETHUH.

I-I AM?
'COURSE Y'ARE. YU'R NOT ME UN' HIZ'S HERALD, IS YU? WITH AOR COMPETISHUN'S WHUT YU ARE.
HOW THET'S S'POSED TUH PUT THUH BURIED PLACES BACK ON TOP AGIN, AH DON'T KNOW.
FACT, I'D SAY YU WUZ RECKLUSS JEST COMIN' HEEYUH. LETTIN' YU CARRY ON YUR BIZNIS, THET AIN'T TUH AOR UDVANIDGE.
ATHOL
SEEMS TUH ME, YUR PUTTIN' A SPOKE IN US WHEATLEYS' WHEEL NOT ALLOWIN' GRANPAPPY IN THUH LIBERY TUH SEE THE BOOK NUR THE AKLO LETTUHS.
BE FAIR PLAY FUR US TUH DO LAHKWAHS.
THEYUH NAOW. AIN'T THET UH BEAUTY?
L-LOOK, WILLARD, PLEASE, I... I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU THINK I AM, BUT...
OH, DONCHUH NAOW? AH KNOWS WHO YU IS BETTER'N YU DO. BETTER'N GRANPAPPY UN' THE WUMMUN, UN' AWL.
UN' AH KNOWS WHUT'S TUH BE DUN. AH GOT MATTUHS TUH ATTEND AHT IN THUH YARD.
YU STICK RAHT HEEYUH. AH WUN'T BE MORE'N UH MINNIT.
S-SURE. WILLARD, I'M JUST HERE TO MEET YOUR FAMILY...
WELL, THET'S JEST WHUT YU'R GONNUH DO.
DON'T YU GO ENNYWHERES, NAOW.

the Boys 1917
Ronald Underwood Pitman, Photographer & Portraitist
21, Henchman Street, North End, Boston.

MR. BLACK, THERE Y'ARE. WE WAS WONDERIN' WHERE YOU'D GOT TO.
AN' WHERE'S THAT WILLARD BOY? WEREN'T HE HERE WHEN YOU GOT HERE?
UH... YES. YES, HE WAS HERE. HE JUST HAD TO GO AND DO SOMETHING IN THE YARD.
H-HE SEEMED ANGRY. TO BE HONEST, I DON'T THINK HE LIKED ME.
I-I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING HE SAID, BUT... WELL, HE SEEMED UPSET ABOUT THE NEWSPAPER I USED TO WORK FOR.
BOY PROBABLY NEEDS TO LIE DOWN IS ALL. STILL, MAYBE IT'S BEST YOU LEAVE 'FORE HE GETS WORSE.
THAT'S RIGHT. EVERY MONTH ABOUT THIS TIME, HE TAKES HIS NAP. HE'LL BE BETTER AFTER...
LETICIA, YOU HUSH YOUR MOUTH NOW, DARLIN'.
IT'S BEEN RIGHT GOOD TO MEET YOU, MR. BLACK. DON'T MEAN TO RUSH YOU OFF THE PROPERTY AN' ALL. IT'S JUST...
NO, NO, I UNDERSTAND. IT'S STARTING TO GET LATE, ANYWAY. I HOPE I DIDN'T UPSET THINGS...
AW, WILLARD'S PROBABLY OFF SULKIN' DOWN THE RAVINE AGAIN...
WELL, BEARS DEN'S QUITE A WAYS SOUTH, BUT YOU'RE RIGHT. WHEN THAT CHILD GETS IN A HUMOR, NO TELLIN' WHAT HE'S GONNA DO.
YOU SHOULD BE AT NO HAZARD GETTIN' BACK T'ATHOL, YOU STICK TO THE ROAD. WERE YOU STOPPIN' AT THE PEQUOIG, OR...
OH, MERCY!
OH, MERCY, WHAT'S HE DONE?

OH, NO! OH, WHAT'S HE DONE? WHAT'S THAT WICKED BOY DONE?
UH...
BY THE OLD LAND. THAT SPITEFUL LITTLE HELLION...
COME ON, MR. BLACK. BEST WE GET YOU OUTTA HERE...
NO! NO, YOU GET BACK! YOU GET BACK INSIDE!
BUT... I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT'S...?
MR. BLACK, I HAVE TO INSIST. THIS IS A PERSONAL FAMILY CONCERN...
UM, YES. YES, OF COURSE...
THE UPSTAIRS IS READY SOON. YOU CAN GET MORE ROOM THEN. OH, MY BABY...
FOR PITY'S SAKE, LET'S JUST LEAVE HER WITH IT...
THERE.
YOU HUSH, MY ANGEL.
YOU JUST HUSH NOW...

SORRY FOR HURRYIN', BUT I DIDN'T WANT YOU SHOULD SEE LETTY LIKE THAT. SHE GETS HIGH-STRUNG FROM TIME TO TIME.
SHE AIN'T NEVER BEEN WHAT YOU'D CALL MENTALLY *POWERFUL.* MOTHERHOOD'S PUT A STRAIN ON HER, AN' I WEREN'T ALWAYS THE BEST O' PARENTS...
LOOK, ALL THAT, IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS. I'M SURE LIVING IN THE COUNTRY IS HARD AND, UH, YOU DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.
I'M SORRY YOU'VE BEEN TREATED SO BADLY BY YOUR FORMER COLLEAGUES. YOU'VE CERTAINLY BEEN A GREAT HELP TO ME, TELLING ME ABOUT SAINT ANSELM.
WELL, THEM STELL SAPS, THEY'RE LIKE PLENTY O' PEOPLE, UP IN THEIR TOWNS WHERE THEY GOT THINGS ORDERED HOW THEY *WANTS* 'EM.
LIVIN' HOW WE DO, WE'RE *OUTSIDE* ALL THAT, SO THEY IMAGINES THE WORST.
YOU'RE HEADED FOR MANCHESTER, I WISH YOU BETTER LUCK THAN WHAT I HAD.
YOUR HELP'S BETTER THAN LUCK.
THAT'S GOOD TO KNOW. I HOPES AS YOU'LL SPEAK KINDLY OF US WHEATLEYS WHEN YOUR BOOK'S ALL DONE.
MR. WHEATLEY, YOU CAN *COUNT* ON IT. I FEEL LIKE YOU'VE CONNECTED ME WITH A KIND OF OLD *KNOWLEDGE*.
JUST THAT LEAD TO *MANCHESTER*, YOU'VE REALLY PUT ME ON THE RIGHT *PATH*. I CAN'T *WAIT*.

I'M HAPPY TO OBLIGE. JUST SO LONG AS YOU REMEMBER THAT THEM PATHS TO THE OLD KNOWLEDGE ONLY GOES ONE *WAY.*
ONCE YOU'RE *THERE*, YOU CAN'T COME HOME NO MORE.
NOW LISTEN, I HATE TO SEEM DISRESPECTFUL, BUT YOU REALLY OUGHTTA BE GETTING *ALONG*...
OF COURSE. THANKS AGAIN... AND GOOD LUCK WITH *WILLARD.*
I'LL BEAR THAT IN MIND. GOODNIGHT TO YOU, MR. WHEATLEY, AND GIVE LETICIA MY REGARDS.
AIN'T ME NEEDS THE LUCK WITH WILLARD.
YOU GO STRAIGHT ON BACK AND DON'T GO CUTTIN' THROUGH NO *FIELDS* OR NOTHIN'.
DARK NIGHT LIKE THIS, AIN'T JUST THEM THINGS WHAT YOU CAN SEE IS GONNA DO YOU HARM.
THERE WAS NO HAND TO HOLD ME BACK THAT NIGHT I FOUND THE ANCIENT TRACK,

AND REACHED THE CREST TO SEE OUTSPREAD A VALLEY OF THE LOST AND DEAD:
ATHOL 1 MILE
AND OVER ZAMAN'S HILL THE HORN OF A MALIGNANT MOON WAS BORN, TO LIGHT THE WEEDS AND VINES THAT GREW ON RUINED WALLS I NEVER KNEW.
THE FOX-FIRE GLOWED IN FIELD AND BOG, AND UNKNOWN WATERS SPEWED A FOG WHOSE CURLING TALONS MOCKED THE THOUGHT THAT I HAD EVER KNOWN THIS SPOT.
ATHOL 1 MILE
TOO WELL I SAW FROM THAT MAD SCENE THAT MY LOVED PAST HAD NEVER BEEN--
NOR WAS I NOW UPON THE TRAIL DESCENDING TO THAT LONG-DEAD VALE. AROUND WAS FOG-- AHEAD, THE SPRAY OF STAR-STREAMS IN THE MILKY WAY...
ATHOL 1 MILE
THERE WAS NO HAND TO HOLD ME BACK THAT NIGHT I FOUND THE ANCIENT TRACK.
ATHOL 1 MILE
Providence

July 30th

Am enjoying Athol, but probably for the wrong reasons, i.e. the pretty brunette at the reception desk that I think I may have a chance with. I'm certainly not making much progress with Marblehead: an American Undertow (my new title, I think I'm pretty definite about it), mostly on account of nobody around here seeming to know anything about this Garland Wheatley fellow or his family. I'm starting to suspect the Wheatleys were just something Mr. Boggs in Salem made up as a joke so he could send an out-of-towner off on a wild goose chase. I guess it would make me pretty mad if this whole thing were just to fizzle out, what with me having talked it up the way I have.

As for ideas I've had a couple, although what with feeling so discouraged at the moment I can't see a lot of merit in them. One was something like Wilde's prose-poems, one of his jewelled allegories. I considered a short fantasy about the giant turtle who, as legend has it, carries the whole universe upon his back, although the universe itself is of course largely ignorant concerning the slow giant upon which it rests, The people's prayers and hymns to all their numerous creator gods are sung out endlessly, while all the time remaining ignorant of the vast, patient creature that is actually their deity. The turtle hears them thank and praise all the imaginary gods they have invented without ever mentioning the actual being upon whom the whole existence of their world depends. Growing dispirited, the turtle dies and dries away to a colossal empty shell on which oblivious humanity continues to act out the rites and rituals of their similarly dead and hollow religions. It's not a bad conceit, but the metaphor at the middle of it is altogether too obvious and clumsy. Wilde could probably have tackled it but, I rather fear, not I.

August 2nd

Still waiting for the front desk brunette to make up their mind. Had a vague notion for a story of the supernatural in the style of Poe, part-based upon a muddled half-remembered dream I had last night. The story would involve a young investigator... I was thinking a detective like the rugged Tom Malone although with more consideration I can see that maybe a young journalist would do as well and wouldn't need a lot of extra research to get all the little details right. Anyway, this investigator is investigating some supernatural horror, where he is led by stages through a series of minor weird incidents until finally he encounters the supreme catastrophic nightmare at the climax of the tale and is

consumed by it, etc. If I wanted to try something really modern I could use the epistolary form, as in Bram Stoker's Dracula. This would at least solve the problem as to how the story came to be in existence, despite a narrator who will be dead by the story's conclusion. If it's been written down step by step in a series of letters, then these missives could be presented as having been acquired from the character's correspondents after his demise. I think it's important to make one's more fantastic stories as believable as possible by providing a rational means by which word of these outrageous events can have reached the reading public. A few of Poe's ideas were presented, for example, in the manner of hoaxes. Anyway, the major problem with the idea is in the logic of the story itself. The thing is, for the supernatural elements to be effective and believable, it's important they occur to a protagonist who is himself believable, someone who reacts and behaves in the way that the reader imagines they might in similar circumstances. Now, if something supernatural were to actually occur to someone in real life, anyone normal would just run a mile. They wouldn't have the author and reader's interest in unravelling the mystery and getting to the story's end. They'd simply flee. I know I would, and I like to think that I'm a normal person underneath it all. I suppose the only way to handle it realistically is to rely on people's tendency not to believe that anything out of the ordinary is going on, even if evidence is mounting to the contrary. If I should, say, encounter a real vampire like the folks in Mr. Stoker's book, I doubt I'd be as ready to believe in its ~~exi~~ existence as the valiant vampire-hunting crew in Dracula appear to be. I think I'd go through all possible explanations... everything from a trick of the light or eyestrain to the assumption that I had personally gone insane and was hallucinating... before I'd accept that such a thing as immortal human bloodsuckers could possibly exist. And if I ever did accept that fact as a reality, I would immediately attempt to get as far away as possible. Perhaps the trick is to have one's protagonist delude himself through all the early eerie incidents that it's only his imagination, then for the tale's author to contrive some method whereby once the character can no longer deny the supernatural nature of events, he is already too involved in the process to escape from it. Perhaps before his dreadful realisation he has severed all connections with his previous life, having no reason to anticipate that things could go so badly? That seems to make a kind of sense, at least to me. It seems important that the characters in mystery stories shouldn't realise they're in a mystery story, or at least not until it's too late to extricate themselves.

August 3rd

A dreary Sunday, although not without its highlights. Had an idea for a tale about a vampire (probably after thinking about Dracula last night), but with the normal logic of such stories reversed: what if the supernatural properties of a vampire's blood led him to be hunted down by ambitious human beings who wanted to drink it and thus themselves to share in his miraculous abilities and longevity? Another bright note was when the reception brunette told me they'd a night off on this coming Tuesday and seemed not averse to sharing it with me. Of course, who knows and all that, and I'm not getting my hopes up, but I've decided to find a good barber here in Athol tommorrow so that I'll be at my most presentable the following evening. Surely they must have heard of barbers, even out here in 19TH century New England?

August 4th

Well, I found a barbershop. And I also found the Wheatleys. I'm back in my room now and I want to get it all down, as much as anything so that I can begin myself to understand the awful thing I think I saw this afternoon. I'll start at the beginning with the barber, who I found down at the eastern end of Main Street. The old fellow in there seemed perpetually disgruntled, but for all that was agreeable so that I found him nice enough, all things considered. He gave me a good shave, a haircut and a singe just like I saw the barber give to grown-up men when I was still a kid back in Milwaukee. I don't know any barber does it in New York these days, so it was something of a journey to the past. Well, when I told him why I was in Athol and then mentioned this elusive Wheatley family I was looking for, he proved to be a mine of surly information. He informed me that the Wheatleys weren't exactly held in high regard around those parts, which possibly accounts for why I've had a devil of a time persuading Athol's citizens to tell me anything about them. It turned out the family were living out off the North Orange Road, along a track called the Old Turnpike in an area of farmland known as the Cass Meadow. It was already late afternoon by then, but I rashly decided to take a walk out there.

I found the place easy enough, but the front yard was so overgrown and full of rusting junk that I started doubting anybody truly lived there. When I

got no answer at the front door I went out around the back and found the farmyard proper. There were chickens pecking, and a long old barn or shed that had its front doors all chained up and padlocked fast. Outside of this there were some puddles of what looked like blood (as I soon thereafter learned they actually were, with the locked shed being where all of the slaughtering upon the farm takes place), and as I was snooping around I was suddenly accosted by one of the oddest-looking old men that I've ever seen. He was bald but with long greasy hair around the sides, and something about his nose and the set of his eyes made him look like an elderly but still-belligerent goat. He was wearing what looked like an old bath-robe that had all of these enamel pins and badges fastened to it – I think I saw a Knights of Pythias pin and a couple of others that looked like Freemason emblems – and once he'd gotten over his initial understandable mistrust of me he seemed only too willing to tell me all about Hali's book and the Stella Sapiente.

The man was, of course, Garland Wheatley himself, and while I'd understood that he no longer had connections in the order from what Mr. Boggs of Salem told me, he was keen that I should hear his side of what went on. He listed a whole string of grievances connected with the "bringing down the stone" event of 1882, which Mr. Boggs had mentioned although I still don't have any real idea what it was all about. If I understood him correctly, it was somewhere around the same time that Mr. Wheatley's wife had died unpleasantly, and he seemed to connect the two events in his mind to the point where he almost seemed to be suggesting that he blamed the Stella Sapiente for his wife's demise. I guess that grief unravels us and sometimes makes us harbour strange ideas, or at least that's my own experience. It appears that some few decades after this there was another dispute concerning the order's 'Redeemer' prophecy, and Mr. Wheatley and his daughter Leticia (whose drawings I include here) were expelled from the Stella Sapiente under a cloud of mutual accusations. As far as I could make out, there was a certain amount of snobbery involved in the expulsion, or at least that was Garland Wheatley's understanding of the matter. When I sympathized and told him I was working on a book, I think he saw me as an opportunity to maybe get his family's side of the story over to the reading public, and insisted that I meet his daughter and his grandson. While he went off in search of the latter he left me in the gloomy farmhouse in the company of the former, Miss Leticia Wheatley.

What I done up the hill

Leticia was a simple-minded and thick-set albino woman that I judged to be around her early forties. I can't make my mind up if she seemed just naturally slow-witted or if it was more like she had a disturbance in her thinking on account of something that she'd witnessed or had happened to her, like a lot of those poor fellows coming back from Europe at the end of last year. She sat in the farmhouse making crayon pictures that looked like the work of an unbalanced five year-old, as in the examples included here, and when I made an innocent enquiry as to where her offsprings' father was she started on this rambling, incoherent story of which I could barely make a lick of sense, at least at first. It soon became plain that she was describing the conception of her child, one night up by a local landmark, the Sentinel Elm (it was apparently used as a lookout point by both the settlers and the redskins back in pioneering times). It seemed to me like there was some tremendous horror hidden in her disjointed account, some awful secret with regard to the identity of her son's father. Only when she spoke of how her own pa, Garland Wheatley, had been present during the conception did I start to understand the whole unspeakable affair. My God. You hear about how these things are forever going on among the rural poor, but I'd always assumed such tales were born of city prejudices. While I was still trying to absorb the ultimate monstrosity behind Leticia's story, the old man himself returned and told me that his grandson (and, I suspect, son), one Willard Wheatley, was studying in a shack across the yard and would spare a little time to talk with me if I was of a mind.

If I had needed confirmation of my terrible suspicions, Willard Wheatley certainly provided all the proof that I could ask for at a glance: his face had the same goat-like look to it that I had noticed in his grandfather, while his body and I fear his mind were much afflicted by the abnormalities of birth which I am told most frequently result from such close family liasons. He smelled absolutely dreadful and was just about the biggest youngster of his age I've ever seen — I think he said that he was sixteen and a half, although he struck me as at least a few years older, with a voice so deep and guttural that I swear it was making the floorboards under my feet vibrate in sympathy. He was making something out of little glass cubes that he'd somehow glued together — I'm certain I remember a big pot of glue there on the little table he was sitting at — into a shape with lots of facets, probably a homemade decoration for a Christmas tree or something of that nature. It was actually quite

pretty and ingenious but for some fool reason looking at it gave me a mild headache, so I quit. I generally get on pretty good with youngsters, but with Willard it was evident right from the start that he detested me. I don't know what he thought I'd done, but he seemed set in his opinion that I was in some way siding with his family's enemies. He also seemed to know that I used to work for the Herald, so I guess that Mr. Boggs of Salem must have sent a letter that preceded me, informing him of that. I must say that New Englanders seem frightfully impressed to have a real live New York journalist that they can gawp at. If this goes on, I could get swell-headed from all the attention.

Willard didn't look impressed, though. He got up from his table and told me to wait there while he went off to do something in the farmyard. Standing up, he was taller than I am, and I noticed he had something wrong with both legs so that he was forced to wear what looked like homemade orthopaedic boots, presumably another birth defect or something. While he was away I took the opportunity to look around his study-room and came across a photograahp of Willard sitting on a sofa and fooling around, some years younger by the look of him. The caption underneath the picture had a misprint, so it read "the boys" instead of just "the boy", but it was clearly Willard, dressed in almost the same tightly-buttoned clothes so that besides his hands and face there's not an inch of flesh that's visible. Down at the bottom just inside the picture frame there was the name and the address of the photographer which I had time to memorize, a Ronald Pitman of 21, Henchman Street in the North End of Boston. Who knows? It might turn out to be useful to me and my novel at some future point.

At that point Mr. Wheatley Senior and his pereputually-startled looking daughter came out to the shack to see how I was getting on. They were surprised that Willard wasn't there and suddenly seemed in a hurry I should leave. This was just fine by me, since Garland Wheatley had already told me everything I needed — namely that an English language version of the legendary Hali's Booke was gifted by the Stella Sapiente to St. Anselm College, overlooking Manchester, New Hampshire — and by that point I was eager to put the appalling Wheatley family far behind me. As it turned out there was another strange turn of events in store for me. As we walked back, across the yard, I noticed that the padlocked barn down at the bottom was now standing with

its doors wide open. This appeared to drive both Garland Wheatley and his daughter to distraction, though why this should be I couldn't tell you since the barn was absolutely empty other than some dirty straw. Distraught and gibbering, Leticia ran towards this, talking to the empty air so that I came to understand how badly the outrageous ordeal of her son's conception had unhinged her. Garland Wheatley, obviously embarrassed that I should be witness to his daughter's madness, said that we should "leave her with it" and fair rushed me off the property. The night was settling in by then and I had an uneasy walk back to the Pequoig here, where I sit writing this. To tell the truth, the prospect of a visit to St. Anselm has me pretty worked up, and unless my thing with the receptionist works out tomorrow I may head out to New Hampshire the day after. We shall see.

August 5th

I may be staying here a little longer after all.

August 12th

Feeling rather guilty about stalling with my book for all this while. I have to say that my new plaything isn't the most intellectually demanding company I've ever had, but on the other hand...

August 13th

Had what I suppose you'd call a good time with my new flame last night, at least in the purely corporeal sense, although there was a point where it became obvious that they thought Chatterton had been an English Prime minister which very nearly ruined even that side of things for me, but eventually I managed a recovery. Suffice it to be said that after this encounter the faint drizzle of mild guilt I was experiencing (over my neglect of my supposedly forthcoming novel and these pages) has become a deluge, and to that end I have penitently made myself sit at the makeshift desk in my hotel room and have sworn not to turn in or to make any flesh-is-weak calls to reception before I've got at least a few good ideas for stories or maybe some musings on the novel written down here. We'll see.

The first notion that comes to mind is a kind of coming-of-age story,

set somewhere a long way inland — I guess Milwaukee would be as good as anywhere. Anyway, there would have to be some sort of contrivance which meant that the whole family, for a couple of generations, had some reason to hate and fear the idea of going to sea. Perhaps almost all of the family, including some of its best-loved members, were drowned in some dreadful ocean-going incident, maybe while they were travelling to America in the 19th century. I'd have to work out some way that at least one member of the family was rescued in order to found the family in the first place. I guess it wouldn't be stretching credibility to have one of the children perhaps picked up by a fishing boat and going on to become the family matriarch. Now, the central character in my narrative is a young man of this family who, since he was a small child, has secretly harboured a longing for a life on the roaring deep; has always known that it was his destiny to be a sailing man, and yet knowing of his family's aversion has been made to feel unnatural and unworthy simply because of his human nature and his perfectly understandable dreams, dreams that he can never reveal to his kin for fear that he become outcast. I'm already imagining this as possibly a stage play, with lots of really dramatic and emotional scenes where the protagonist agonizes over the fact that on the one hand he loves his parents and wants them to love him, but on the other hand he's angry with them for not allowing him to be who he really is inside. And at night in Milwaukee, all he does is lie there and fantasize pathetically about what it would be like if he could be hauling on ropes in the salt spray and trusting his life to his rugged comrades out there on the crashing billows. I suppose people would say it was too much like Eugene O'Neill, but I think I could put enough of myself into to make the difference. I'm already empathizing with this young would-be mariner: He's all alone with his anguish, just chewing himself up over his unfulfilled desires. He can't talk to his family. He can't

I've just thought. Why can't he talk to his friends? Or to somebody else in Milwaukee? I mean, in order for the analogy that I'm driving at to work properly, almost everybody in his community would have to have the same loathing for the sea as his great-great-grandmother or whoever she was. Perhaps some massive marine disaster that had blighted the lives of a number of families in the community? Except we're in Milwaukee. No, this is useless. I'm just clutching at straws here. The basic premise has got a gaping hole in

it... at least until I come up with a better analogy for what I really want to say. It's a shame, because I was starting to get quite excited about all of the shipboard material. Oh, well, I suppose I can always hold the idea in abeyance until a more appropriate story device comes along, some different and more credible badge of shame with which to motivate my blatantly self-inspired central character. I guess I'm just not feeling very inspired this evening. Maybe I'll finish reading Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter, or maybe I'll just have an early night. I'm not sure I'm really in the mood for all that sexual castigation and New England Puritanism. Maybe it's easier to read Hawthorne when you're safely in some cosmopolitan environment like New York, rather than right in the middle of the place and the people and the situations he was writing about, which I fear have changed less than one might hope in the intervening decades.

August 14TH

Still casting around for ideas, I took another look at Leticia Wheatley's crayon drawings. I confess that I hadn't really paid them much attention beyond observing that they looked like the work of somebody who was mentally disturbed, probably by reason of the unnatural family closeness that I was discussing earlier. Re-examining them, however, while I'm no less convinced of Leticia's unfortunate psychological condition, I paid more attention to their extraordinary content. What on earth is that thing with "John Divine" scrawled under it? Actually, thinking about it, that was a name that she mentioned while we were talking. It was very odd: she'd been talking about her son, and when I asked if she meant her son Willard she seemed to become very flustered and anxious, and asked me whether she'd referred to him as John Divine. Looking at her picture, though, I can't even tell what I'm supposed to be looking at. It isn't just that the picture is badly drawn, as though by a simple-minded child; it's more a matter of whatever it was she was attempting to depict. I mean, that drawing isn't just a picture of a cow or a horse that's gone badly wrong. Admittedly, it looks sort of like some kind of horrible insect, maybe, except that there isn't any insect like that anywhere in the world, or at least I hope that there isn't! Besides — and I can't really say why I think this is the case — the thing that she's drawn doesn't strike me as a

magnification of some microscopic germ or pond-creature, but more like a depiction of something at least the same size as the drawing itself and maybe even bigger. Obviously, anybody else and I'd have been at least slightly in awe of their capacity for fantastic invention, if not so impressed by their artistic abilities. The thing is, though, that I'd be willing to swear on a stack of bibles that Leticia Wheatley is no more capable of utilising her imagination than she is of flying. My best guess, judging purely from that "John Divine" business, is that the name would seem to be an obvious contraction of St. John the Divine, who of course was said to be the author of the biblical Book of Revelations. Given that Garland Wheatley is the closest thing to some sort of hayseed version of an Old Testament prophet that I've ever encountered, it's not difficult to imagine a lot of apocalyptic bible-talk circulating around the family dinner-table. I suppose the most reasonable explanation would be that the monstrosity in Leticia's crayon-scribble is her somewhat inaccurate interpretation of the Great Beast as described in that particular piece of scripture.

The question of its origins aside, however, I've got to say that it's quite a compelling and striking image, for all its glaring artlessness. What I'm getting at is the sheer unprecedented originality of Leticia's deranged vision: when was there ever a creature half so disturbing described in literature or art? In terms of visual invention it knocks Gustav Moreau into a cocked hat, and might even be the envy of a Hieronymus Bosch, who, after all, tended to put everyday things into disquieting combinations or simply to depict them with wildly different proportions. Leticia's chimera, on the other hand, looks like something that has never existed before, nor yet even been imagined outside of an asylum. And when it comes to literary comparisons the relative level of invention is perhaps ever more shameful and dispiriting. Even in the most deliberately shocking and ghoulish dime fare, are we doomed to have nothing more imaginative than ghosts with rattling chains, or perhaps the occasional vampire or were-wolf? Looking at Leticia's crude depiction of the most appalling horror that I've ever seen, I don't even know if we have a form of literature that could contain it. The scientific fancies of a Verne or even a Wells seem insufficient somehow, with the grotesquery of Wells' Martians easily outdistanced by Leticia's spidery-centipede-thing. As for supernatural stories, where in Poe or Bierce is there anything more physically dreadful? Stoker's

bloodsucking Count embraces his limited range of basically ordinary mammalian forms to the point where, next to Leticia's naive offering, he appears to be a staid conventionalist; and even Richard Marsh's more popular The Beetle, while certainly more delirious and strange in its horror than Stoker's book, only offers us a very large and malignantly intelligent beetle, as opposed to Leticia's phantasmagorical insectile hybrid. I suppose the point of all this rambling is my suspicion that it might be possible, using startling and actually demented ideas such as Leticia's, to construct an entirely new form of frightening story with nary a witch or a warlock anywhere in sight.

While it's a tantalizing idea, it sounds like it would require a far greater talent than that demonstrated by my own fledgling skills. For one thing I suspect that despite all my complaining about how unsatisfying my life is or how much of an outsider I may feel myself to be at times, I'm at heart far too normal and well-balanced; too cautious to really let myself go with the flight of sheer lunacy that the kind of story I'm imagining would require. Even poor old Poe, who a few moments ago I was comparing unfavourably with Leticia in terms of invention, had a life of mental torment and anguish that I could never endure, even if it inspired me to the sublime literary heights that Poe himself achieved. Which, of course, makes my thoughts return to Leticia herself. What kind of unimaginable mental condition must she be in, in order for her to have conceived grotesques that would put to shame Poe's most lurid and alcohol-drenched fever-dreams? Frankly, just the idea of her living out there with her embittered, crazy father and that deformed child of hers is more of a horror tale than I care to contemplate, let alone write. Another unproductive evening. Why do I even bother?

August 17th

That's it. I can't take any more of these ridiculous and vacuous attempts at conversation. "Oh, you know the song I really love? I don't know what it's called but it goes la-la-la-la. Do you know the one I mean?" All that it does is make me yearn for Lily and long discussion about Gautier. To be quite honest I'd be better off with Prissy Turner from the Herald office! At least she remembered what I'd told her about Sous le Monde, even if she got it mixed

up with The King in Yellow and then even got the title wrong on that. Actually, now I come to think of it I guess that it was Prissy who's responsible for setting me on course to write my novel in the first place, so I probably should thank her and stop thinking mean things about what a scatterbrain she is. And anyway, beside my current very temporary romantic interest, Prissy is Sir Isaac Newton, I've decided, up here in my room this Sunday night, that when there's that melancholy-looking older man at the reception desk tomorrow morning, I'll be checking out unannounced and heading for New Hampshire. I've been surreptitiously enquiring after bus times and it turns out there's one bound for Bedford at a quarter after nine on Mondays. Bedford isn't far from Manchester, and I imagine I can find a ride from there. Now that I've made my mind up to move on and ditch Miss Dingbat, I'm beginning to get more enthusiastic at the prospect of a visit to St. Anselm College, even if it's some old, stuffy Catholic institution full of ancient, dusty professors. According to what Garland Wheatley said, the college library has had a copy of the book I'm looking for since around 1889. It seemingly survived a library fire not long thereafter, and this was the selfsame volume that old "Warlock" Wheatley (as I hear they call him) copied out a passage from by hand at Tobit Boggs' request for Dr. Alvarez. That was before the order expelled Garland and his daughter around 1913 after which, much to his irritation, Wheatley has been refused access to the book. (The Stella Sapiente, as important benefactors, seemingly exert a lot of influence with Catholic concerns such as St. Anselm and some church that Wheatley mentioned in Rhode Island, or at least such is the old man's theory.) I'm hoping that the people at St. Anselm will be more obliging when it comes to showing me the book tomorrow, but I'll cross that bridge soon as I get to it and not before. Anyway, if I'm to get off early in the morning then I better get my suitcase packed before I go to bed tonight. I somehow feel that Manchester is situated at the exact heart of this peculiar chain of people and events that I'm researching. We'll find out tomorrow, I suppose.

August 19th

Thank heavens!

I'm writing this from the safety of Dr. North's rooms here in Manchester and

CHAPTER 5

"My mental picture of Arkham is of a town something like Salem in atmosphere & style of houses, but more hilly... The street layout is nothing like Salem's. As to the location of Arkham — I fancy I place the town & the imaginary Miskatonic somewhere north of Salem — perhaps near Manchester."

—To F. Lee Baldwin,
April 29, 1934

"SO, THIS IS YOUR ONLY TIME IN MANCHESTER, MR...BLACK, DID YOU SAY?
"AND HOW ARE YOU FINDING IT?"
Welcome to MANCHESTER
"BLACK, YES, THAT'S RIGHT. ACTUALLY, I JUST *ARRIVED.* A LOCAL FELLOW, MR. JENKINS, KINDLY GAVE ME A RIDE FROM BEDFORD.
"COMING IN, WE PASSED THROUGH THAT BRIEF THUNDERSTORM, FOLKS ALL RUNNING FOR SHELTER. HOPE THAT'S NOT YOUR *REGULAR* WEATHER.
"IT EVEN LOOKED AS IF FALL WAS ARRIVING EARLY, WITH TREES ALREADY CHANGING COLOR."
"ARE THEY REALLY? I CONFESS I HAVEN'T BEEN OUT THAT WAY RECENTLY.
"I MUST HAVE BLINKED AND MISSED YOUR THUNDERSTORM AS WELL. I'LL TELL YOU, MANCHESTER COULD *USE* A GOOD DOWNPOUR. IT HASN'T RAINED IN A WHILE.
"BUT YOU WERE SAYING YOU'D COME TO SAINT ANSELM TO RESEARCH A *BOOK*...?"
"YES. IT'S A NOVEL I'M PLANNING ON ESOTERIC NEW ENGLAND *BELIEFS.* SOMEONE SUGGESTED YOUR COLLEGE OVERLOOKING MANCHESTER MIGHT HAVE THE ANSWERS."
"HA! MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS, I'M AFRAID. BUT AS FOR ESOTERIC BELIEFS, YOU'RE NEARER THE MARK.
"THESE CLOISTERS HAVE HAD ODD ASSOCIATIONS SINCE FATHER BRADLEY INVESTIGATED THAT METEORITE BEFORE *FOUNDING* THIS PLACE..."

FROM THEN ON, SAINT ANSELM SEEMS TO HAVE ATTRACTED EVERY SQUINTING ECCENTRIC OR OUTLANDISH RUMOR IN THE REGION.
SOMETIMES YOU'D ALMOST THINK THAT MYSTERY HAD CONTAMINATED THE BRICKWORK.
V: IN THE WALLS

I THINK I'VE HEARD TELL OF THE METEORITE.
ALSO, DON'T YOU HAVE AN ARAB *ALCHEMICAL* WORK IN THE COLLEGE LIBRARY? I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T GET YOUR NAME...
RACE. FATHER WALTER RACE. I'M HEAD OF *LANGUAGES.*
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT HALI'S *BOOK*, I TAKE IT? YES, WE'VE ENJOYED A LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT PARTICULAR CONUNDRUM.
WASN'T IT GIFTED TO SAINT ANSELM BY...I DON'T KNOW, SOME SORT OF *PHILANTHROPICAL* SOCIETY?
OH... THE STELLA SAPIENTE, WAS IT? I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THEM BUT, YES, THEY'RE IMPORTANT *BENEFACTORS.*
EVEN SUGGESTED OUR *MOTTO*, I HEARD. "INITIUM SAPIENTIAE TIMOR DOMINI".
"THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM".
AS FOR THAT CONFOUNDED BOOK, YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE DR. WANTAGE, OUR LIBRARIAN. HE'LL BE BACK NEXT WEEK.
EVEN LINGUISTICALLY, IT'S BEWILDERING. THERE'S AN INVENTED *ALPHABET* AND *VOCABULARY*...
TERMS LIKE *"YR NHHNGR"*, WHICH IS APPARENTLY A *TENSE* DENOTING NESTED *TIME.*
IT SOUNDS FASCINATING. MAYBE I COULD FIND A MANCHESTER HOTEL UNTIL NEXT WEEK...
WELL, THE HOTELS FILL UP FAST IN AUGUST, BUT THERE ARE LODGING-HOUSES AROUND *GOFFS FALLS.*
IF YOU'VE TIME TO KILL, I HEAR THERE ARE GOVERNMENT PEOPLE INVESTIGATING THE *METEORITE* SITE, OUT PAST SEBBINS BROOK.
I'VE A CLASS NOW, BUT FEEL FREE TO LOOK *AROUND.*
UH, THANKS, FATHER RACE. I'LL DO THAT.

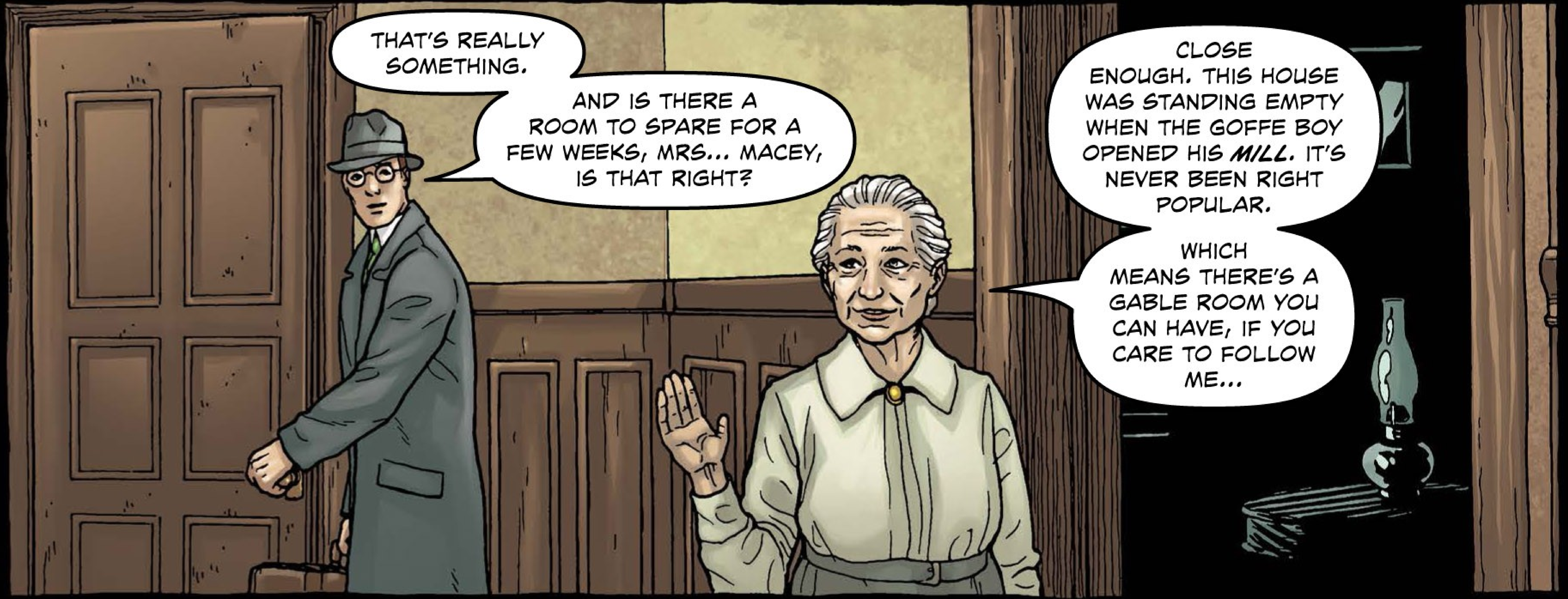
NOW, THAT SOUNDED LIKE A NEW YORK TONE. YOU CAN PRACTICALLY HEAR THE VITALITY
WHY YOU'RE LOOKING FOR LODGINGS AMONG THESE LIFELESS SPECIMENS, I CAN'T IMAGINE...
...ALTHOUGH FROM WHAT OLD RACE WAS SAYING, I'M GUESSING YOU'RE HERE TO PEEP AT THE KITAB?
UM... WELL, YES, ACTUALLY I AM. YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH IT?
OH, I'M OVER-FAMILIAR. I SOUGHT IT OUT WHEN I WAS FIRST A MEDICAL STUDENT HERE, BACK IN 1904.
"THE FOUR METHODS" HAD ME ENTHRALLED.
LOOK, IF YOU NEED SOMEONE TO POINT YOU TO GOFFS FALLS, I COULD WALK YOU OUT...
WHY, THANK YOU. SO, ARE YOU PART OF THE FACULTY HERE NOW?
NOT OFFICIALLY. I'M NOT CATHOLIC ENOUGH. I MEAN, SINCE DR. HALLESLEY DIED NOBODY HERE REMEMBERS ME, BUT NO. I ASSIST IN THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.
I'VE TRAVELLED AROUND A LOT WITH MY...FRIEND, MR. MONTAGUE. WE WERE IN FLANDERS DURING THE WAR.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
WELL, I'M A JOURNALIST. I'M HERE RESEARCHING MY NOVEL.

OH, A NEW YORK WRITER? I THOUGHT YOU LOOKED LIKE SOMEONE WHO KNEW HIS WAY AROUND GREENWICH VILLAGE.
HA HA! IS IT THAT OBVIOUS? FRANKLY, I'M RELIEVED TO FIND A KINDRED SPIRIT OUT HERE.
SO, YOU AND YOUR...FRIEND. IS YOUR PERSUASION WHY YOU'RE "NOT CATHOLIC ENOUGH" TO JOIN THE FACULTY?
DEAR BOY, THAT'S THE VERY LEAST OF IT, I ASSURE YOU.
BESIDES, BISHOP BRADLEY WHO ESTABLISHED SAINT ANSELM, HIS MIDDLE NAME WAS MARY!
HERE'S OUR ADDRESS, IF GOFFS FALLS PROVES TIRESOME. JAMES AND I ALWAYS APPRECIATE A MALE BODY IN GOOD CONDITION, MR...?
BLACK. ROBERT BLACK. THAT'S A TEMPTING OFFER. AND YOUR NAME IS?
NORTH.
DR. HECTOR NORTH, AT YOUR SERVICE.
AND DON'T WORRY... I WON'T ASK YOU TO TAKE CONFESSION. IF TRUTH BE TOLD, I'M MORE OF A REVIVALIST.
"SO ANYWAY, THE NICE MAN I MET AT SAINT ANSELM... YOU KNOW THE COLLEGE UP ON THE HILL? WELL, HE POINTED ME TO GOFFS FALLS...
"HE SAID I SHOULD TAKE RAILROAD STREET DOWN TO GRANITE STREET, AND THAT I'D SPOT THIS BRIDGE OVER THE MERRIMACK FROM THERE.
"YOU SEE, I'M A JOURNALIST... THAT'S SOMEBODY WHO WORKS FOR A NEWSPAPER... AND I NEED A PLACE TO STAY.
"SO, I'M LOOKING FOR GOFFS FALLS. DO YOU THINK YOU COULD DIRECT...?"

WHAT I THINK IS THAT YOU'RE A VERY PATRONIZING YOUNG MAN INDEED!
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT I AM A STUDENT OF SOME STANDING AT SAINT ANSELM.
JUST BECAUSE I'M SMALL YOU'VE GOT NO CALL TO GO THINKING I'M A LITTLE CHILD.
I-I'M SORRY. I JUST ASSUMED...
WAIT A MINUTE. YOU SAY YOU'RE AT COLLEGE? BUT... I MEAN, YOU CAN'T BE MORE THAN...
I'M THIRTEEN AND A HALF. I USED TO BE AT THE GLOVER SCHOOL IN MARBLEHEAD, BUT I GUESS I JUST GOT REAL SMART.
THE MAN WHO DIRECTED YOU. WHAT WAS HIS NAME?
I-IT WAS DOCTOR NORTH. I THINK HE SAID HE HELPED OUT IN THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.
HUH! WELL, HE'S NOT WHAT I'D CALL A VERY REPUTABLE FELLOW AT ALL.
I'M TOLD WHEN HE STUDIED HERE HIS BEHAVIOUR WAS SIMPLY SHOCKING.
THE OLDER GIRLS TRADE ALL SORTS OF RUMORS ABOUT WHAT HE GETS UP TO...

WELL, MAYBE PEOPLE ARE JUST DIFFERENT. THERE ARE SOME TIMES WHEN IT DOESN'T PAY TO LISTEN TO GOSSIP...
WELL, THERE ARE SOME TIMES WHEN IT DOES.
I ROOM NEAR DR. NORTH, AND I DON'T THINK HE'S A VERY NICE MAN.
GOFFS FALLS ARE ABOUT FOUR MILES DOWN THAT WAY, JUST OFF THE COHAS BROOK.
JOHN GOFFE'S SAWMILL WAS MANCHESTER'S FIRST IMPORTANT BUILDING BACK IN 1722, BUT THERE'D BEEN ISOLATED HOUSES THERE SINCE THE SIXTEEN HUNDREDS.
I THINK DOWN THERE WAS STILL PART OF MASSACHUSETTS BACK THEN...
BOY, YOU SURE KNOW YOUR HISTORY.
YOU ARE ONE VERY SMART YOUNG LADY. I'M SORRY FOR TALKING DOWN TO YOU.
HISTORY'S MY BEST SUBJECT. MOST PROBABLY I GET IT FROM MY DADDY EDGAR, WHO PASSED AWAY.
YOU KNOW, MRS. MACEY'S OLD HOUSE IN GOFFS FALLS DOESN'T GET MANY VISITORS. YOU COULD TRY THERE.
MY NAME'S ELSPETH, BY THE WAY. TERRIBLY PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU TOO, ELSPETH. MY NAME'S ROBERT.
"SHE REALLY WAS THE SWEETEST LITTLE THING, AND SHARP AS A TACK.
"I DON'T KNOW IF SHE WAS RIGHT ABOUT YOU HAVING ROOMS TO LET, BUT SHE SEEMED KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THIS AREA, ITS AGE AND EVERYTHING.
"I MEAN, YOUR PLACE HERE... THIS HAS GOT TO BE THE OLDEST HOUSE IN MANCHESTER, SURELY?"

WHY, BLESS YOU, BUT THERE WASN'T A MANCHESTER WHEN THIS HERE WAS BUILT.
WASN'T EVEN AN OLD HARRY'S TOWN BACK THEN, NOR A TYNG'S TOWN NEITHER. NOTHING OF THAT VARIETY.
ALL THIS WAS JUST THE WILDS NORTH OF *SALEM*.


THAT'S REALLY SOMETHING.
AND IS THERE A ROOM TO SPARE FOR A FEW WEEKS, MRS... MACEY, IS THAT RIGHT?
CLOSE ENOUGH. THIS HOUSE WAS STANDING EMPTY WHEN THE GOFFE BOY OPENED HIS *MILL*. IT'S NEVER BEEN RIGHT POPULAR.
WHICH MEANS THERE'S A GABLE ROOM YOU CAN HAVE, IF YOU CARE TO FOLLOW ME...

THAT WOULD BE SWELL.
SO, UH, WHAT ABOUT YOU MRS. MACEY? HAVE YOU BEEN LIVING HERE LONG?
OH, MY GOODNESS, NO. NO, I'VE NOT BEEN WHAT YOU'D CALL LIVING HERE FOR A LONG TIME.
MOSTLY I'M IN ANOTHER SPACE NEARBY, WHERE I CAN KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS. I SEE WHAT GOES ON.
I KNEW ALL ABOUT IT WHEN THE PEOPLE FROM SAINT ANSELM CAME BY LAST YEAR AND PUT THIS PLACE TO THE QUESTION.
THERE WAS THAT FATHER UPTON WHO TEACHES THE MATHEMATICAL SCHOLARS, AND A PROFESSOR BYWOOD WHO ATTENDS TO THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES, BOTH WITH THEIR MEASURING DEVICES.
REALLY? WHAT DID THEY WANT?
WELL, THEY DIDN'T SPEAK DIRECTLY TO ME, SO I DON'T KNOW.
THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT TIME LIKE IT WAS A WIDTH OR A LENGTH, THAT I RECALL.
I EXPECT IT WAS MATTERS FAR TOO CLEVER FOR AN UNEDUCATED PERSON SUCH AS MYSELF.
A WISE WOMAN LIKE YOU? I BET YOU DON'T MISS ANYTHING.
I MISS THE GALLIARD , I'LL TELL YOU THAT FOR NOTHING.
HERE'S YOUR ROOM RIGHT HERE. YOU BETTER BE CAREFUL COMING THROUGH THE DOOR. THE CEILING'S GOT A KIND OF DIP TO IT IN PLACES.
OLD ATTICS LIKE THIS, WITH THE SUBSIDENCE, YOU HAVE TO WATCH THEY DON'T DO YOUR HEAD A MISCHIEF.

UH, WELL, I MEAN, NO. NO, THIS IS JUST FINE WHILE I'M IN MANCHESTER. THIS IS DANDY...
I'M PLEASED TO HEAR IT. YOU HAVE MY APOLOGIES FOR ALL THIS CLUTTER, SO A BODY CAN'T SEE WHERE THEY'RE PUTTING THEIR *FEET.*
ROOMS OF THIS SORT, I'M SURE YOU'LL APPRECIATE, THEY GET ALL *MANNER* OF ODDITIES HIDDEN AWAY IN THEM, OVER TIME.
IT'S TWO DOLLARS FOR THE WEEK, AND IF YOU'VE NO OBJECTION I'LL TAKE A WEEK'S BOARD IN ADVANCE, FOR IF I'M ABSENT ON YOUR *DEPARTURE.*
IF THAT WERE TO HAPPEN AND WE'VE NO OPPORTUNITY FOR FAREWELLS, I SHOULD LIKE TO SAY IT'S AN HONOR TO HAVE YOU IN MY *HOME.*
THE WORK YOU'RE DOING, IT'S BOTH HARD AND GLORIOUS.
WELL, THANKS, BUT JOURNALISM ISN'T REALLY *WOHH!*
I-I'M SORRY. IT JUST FELT AS IF SOMETHING RUBBED PAST MY *LEG*...
OH, THAT'LL BE MY WHISKERY COMPANION MR. JENKINS. I SWEAR I DON'T KNOW HOW HE GETS SOME OF THE PLACES HE DOES.
HERE, YOU LEAVE YOUR LUGGAGE AND WE'LL GO BACK DOWN AND FIND YOU A DOOR-KEY.
I-I GOT A RIDE INTO *TOWN* WITH A MR. JENKINS. JUST A COINCIDENCE, I GUESS...

OH, NO, THAT'S NOT ANY KIND OF COINCIDENCE. JENKINS, AROUND THESE PARTS, IT'S A FAMILIAR NAME.
I EXPECT YOU'LL BE WANTING TO LOOK AROUND MANCHESTER, SEEKING OUT ALL THE SCANDALS AND SECRETS OUR LITTLE TOWN'S CONCEALING.
HA HA. WELL, I'D HEARD THERE WAS A SPACE-METEORITE THAT CRASHED SOMEWHERE WEST OF HERE...
THAT WAS BROUGHT DOWN NEAR ON FORTY YEARS SINCE. QUITE A NIGHT, AS I REMEMBER.
I'LL ALLOW IT WAS A SHAME FOR NOAH FORESTER, THOUGH HIM AND HIS FAMILY WEREN'T OF ANY GREAT ACCOUNT.
THEY COULD HAVE MOVED OUT, THEY'D HAD ANY SENSE. SOME PEOPLE CAN'T SEE WHAT'S IN FRONT OF THEIR NOSES.
IF YOU WANTED TO LOOK AT WHERE THE GROUND WAS TOUCHED, THAT'S UP PAST SEBBINS BROOK, BEFORE YOU REACH THE DARRAH PLACE.
HERE'S THAT KEY, FOR IF I'M NOT APPARENT WHEN YOU'RE BACK. FEEL FREE TO LET YOURSELF IN.
WELL, HERE'S MY TWO DOLLARS ADVANCE.
THIS SEBBINS BROOK... COULD YOU DIRECT ME?
"SO SHE SENT ME OVER THE BRIDGE NEAR THE COAL-YARDS, IF YOU KNOW GOFFS FALLS, THEN PAST THE AMOSKEAG COMPANY TO HERE.
"YOU KNOW, LOOKING AT THIS PLACE, I'M SURPRISED THAT LOCAL JOURNALISTS DIDN'T PAY IT MORE ATTENTION, IF ONE SPACE-ROCK DID THIS.
"YOU GOVERNMENT PEOPLE SURE SEE SOME SIGHTS, HUH?"

YEAH, I GUESS.
YOU, UH... YOU DON'T SEEM TOO KEEN ON YOUR ASSIGNMENT, AGENT...?
STUBBS. FRANK STUBBS. AND BETWEEN YOU AND ME, THIS ASSIGNMENT IS SO MUCH HORSESHIT.
OUR MEN COMING DOWN SICK ALL THE TIME... BEST OF IT IS, WE AIN'T EVEN OFFICIALLY HERE.
THAT'S HOW COME WE GOT THE NEWSPAPERS HEREABOUTS TO KEEP QUIET.
THAT SOUNDS PRETTY SERIOUS. SO WHAT EXACTLY WAS IT THAT HAPPENED HERE?
IT'S, UH, IT'S ALL RIGHT, I'M NOT WITH A NEWSPAPER ANYMORE...
IS THAT SO? WELL, WAY I HEAR IT, THIS DAMN THING JUST FELL OUT OF THE SKY, ELEVENTH OF JUNE, '82, IN THE EARLY HOURS.
LANDED BY THE WELL, THEY RECKON.

THERE'S WHAT'S LEFT OF THE WELL, RIGHT THERE.
FAMILY WHAT LIVED HERE, THE FORESTERS, BEING GOOD CATHOLICS THEY CALLED A FATHER BRADLEY IN MANCHESTER. HE TURNS UP NEXT NIGHT WITH SOME CHURCH BENEFACTORS...
IS THIS FATHER BRADLEY WHO FOUNDED SAINT ANSELM?
YOU KNOW, I WOULDN'T MIND TAKING A LOOK AT THAT WELL...
HAPPY TO OBLIGE.
YEAH, DENIS MARY BRADLEY. HE ORDERED THE COLLEGE BUILT LATER, WHEN HE GOT MADE BISHOP.
HE WAS OUT HERE WITH HIS FRIENDS... THERE WAS A MR. WADE FROM SALEM, AND ANOTHER MAN, AN ENGLISH FELLER ACCORDING TO MR. FORESTER'S STATEMENT.
THESE WERE THE CHURCH BENEFACTORS, PRESUMABLY. AND THEY INSPECTED THE METEORITE?
SO THEIR REPORT SAYS, ALTHOUGH I HAVE SOME TROUBLE WITH THAT. THERE WERE VARIOUS DISCREPANCIES.
IN THE FORESTERS' ACCOUNT, THIS THING HAD POINTS, BUT BRADLEY'S NOTES DON'T MENTION THEM.
WE'VE NO WAY OF CHECKING, SINCE IT SEEMS OUR METEORITE JUST EVAPORATED, YOU CAN BELIEVE THAT.
COURSE, EVERYBODY WHO WAS THERE IS DEAD NOW.

WHAT, EVERYBODY? I MEAN, SURELY THE FAMILY'S CHILDREN WOULD STILL BE ALIVE...
GOOD GOSH! WHAT IN HECK IS *THAT?*
PLENTY OF FOLKS IN WASHINGTON TRYING TO FIGURE THAT OUT RIGHT NOW. SOME KIND OF MOSS THAT GOT *CHANGED* IS OUR BEST GUESS.
AS FOR THE CHILDREN, THE FORESTERS WERE ALL FIRST TO *GO.*
AND, WHAT, THIS WAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE METEORITE?
WELL, IT SURE SEEMS THAT WAY. EVERYTHING CAME IN CONTACT WITH IT GOT *POISONED*, LIKE SOME INVISIBLE *CONTAM-INATION*.
THE FORESTERS WENT CRAZY, RAVING ABOUT COLORS THAT WEREN'T THERE. THEN THEY CONTRACTED THIS... FUNGUS THING, I GUESS.
THAT'S WHAT GOT THE *GOVERNMENT* INVOLVED.
HOW DO YOU MEAN?
WELL, YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THIS PLACE: PEOPLE GONE MAD AND PERISHED, LAND DYING BY THE YEAR... AND THIS WAS SOMETHING *NATURAL*.
NOW, YOU IMAGINE SOMEBODY COMING UP WITH A WEAPON... A GUN OR A BOMB... THAT COULD DO THE SAME THING.
THERE'S TALK OF BUILDING PROTECTIVE *DOMES*...
DOMES OVER ALL THE CITIES, KEEPING OUT THE POISON DUST OR WHATEVER IT IS.
I MEAN, WHO KNOWS WHETHER IT'LL COME TO ANYTHING, AND YOU DIDN'T HEAR IT FROM ME, BUT THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE SAYING.
PROBABLY IT'LL NEVER HAPPEN...
HA! DOMED *CITIES?* WELL, IT SOUNDS ABOUT AS LIKELY AS THEM ENFORCING *PROHIBITION*...

PROHIBITION? THAT'S HAPPENING FOR DEFINITE. THEY'LL BE BEARING DOWN ON THAT COME THE NEW YEAR. WHETHER IT'LL DO ANY GOOD IS ANOTHER MATTER.
SO, WHERE WERE YOU STAYING IN GOFFS FALLS? SOME OF THE BOYS LODGE THERE, BUT I CAN'T PLACE THE HOUSE YOU DESCRIBE.
I MEAN, IT AIN'T LIKE THERE'S THAT MANY...
WELL, IT'S A REAL OLD BUILDING. I THINK IT WAS THERE BEFORE GOFFS FALLS BECAME PART OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.
MY LANDLADY, MRS. MACEY, SAID IT PRE-DATED THE SAWMILL.
HUH. I KNOW THERE'S SOME POLACK WITH A REAL OLD PLACE HE CAN'T LET, BUT THAT'S ALL CLOSED UP LAST I HEARD.
WE MUST BE TALKING ABOUT DIFFERENT PLACES. PROBABLY I'VE MUDDLED UP A LOT OF WHAT SHE TOLD ME.
ANYWAY, I OUGHT TO BE GETTING BACK. THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO EXPLAIN ABOUT THIS SHOOTING STAR BUSINESS.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
SHOOTING STAR, HUH? YOU THINK SOMEBODY INSANE SAW IT FALL, AND THIS WAS THEIR WISH?
"THEN I WALKED BACK TO GOFFS FALLS. I-IT'S ONLY AROUND A HALF-MILE, BUT WHEN I ARRIVED IT WAS DARK, A-AND...
"I JUST THOUGHT... WH-WHAT IF THE POISON DUST OUT AT THAT FARM HAS AFFECTED MY MIND, SO THAT... ?"
"SLOW DOWN. YOU'RE NOT MAKING SENSE. AT GOFFS FALLS, WAS ANYONE HOME?"
"N-NO...

"NO, THERE WAS NOBODY THERE BUT ME."

HEE. IT LOOKS... HEE HEE... IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE DOZIN' OFF, THERE.
WUNNH...?
HEE HEE HEE. I SAID... HEE HEE... I SAID YOU WAS DOZIN' OFF AGAIN.
WHERE I'M FROM, EVERYTHING'S LIKE ME.
I WOULDN'T HAVE... HEE HEE... I WOULDN'T HAVE PICKED YOU UP IN BEDFORD, I THOUGHT YOU'D BE FALLIN' ASLEEP ON ME.
UH... I-I'M REALLY SORRY. I MUST HAVE...
M-MY GOSH. YOU KNOW, THE STRANGEST THING JUST HAPPENED TO ME.
I JUST DREAMED THAT... THAT WE'D ALREADY ARRIVED IN MANCHESTER. I-I'D FOUND LODGINGS, I'D VISITED THIS BLIGHTED FARM. IT WAS ALL SO DETAILED...
HEE HEE HEE. IT'S LIKE A MAZE YOU CAN'T SEE, AIN'T IT?
AND BY THE TIME... HEE HEE HEE HEE... BY THE TIME YOU'VE REALIZED YOU'RE IN IT, IT'S TOO LATE AND THERE'S NO...
HEE HEE HEEEEEEE...
THERE'S NO GETTIN' OUT.
WHERE I'M FROM, EVERYTHING'S LIKE ME.

HHHHHH...
THE TRUTH IS, WE ALL KEPT ALIVE IN OUR DIFFERENT WAYS.
IT WAS SO THAT WE COULD BE HERE TO SEE YOU.

MUH... M-MRS. MACEY? I-I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE... WH-WHAT ARE YOU HERE FOR?
WE'RE ALL... OH!
I BEG YOUR PARDON. IT'S BITING.
WE ALL HAVE *INTELLIGENCE* WE'RE ANXIOUS TO IMPRESS, THAT IT IN TURN MAY BE IMPRESSED ON *HIM.*
THE SHIPMASTER, HIS WAS ONE OF THE THIRD WAYS. THE FRENCHMAN, HIS WAS ONE OF THE *FOURTH.* BUT I UNCOVERED *ANOTHER* WAY, AND...
OH. OH, HAVE YOU BROUGHT THE MILK UP? IS THAT WHAT YOU'VE DONE?
...UBLUH...
OH, GOD...
OH GOD, THIS IS *REAL.* THIS ISN'T...
OH *GOD...*
MMLMM...
I'M GETTING OUT. I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE...
MY CONTINUANCE WAS NOT A MATTER OF ICE, NOR THE PARTICULAR MEAT. IT DID NOT INVOLVE SALTS OR FLUIDS.
THE ANIMAL AND MYSELF HAVE FOUND SUCCOUR IN CERTAIN PROTRACTIONS...
HEEEE. WE'RE ALL... WE'RE ALL CORNERED DIFFERENT...

IN THOSE PARTS FOREIGN TO EUCLID DO WE RESIDE, OF WHERE THE ANIMAL IS THOUGHT TO BE INDIGENOUS.
SUCH TRUE IMPS ARE NOT COMMONLY ACQUIRED. THEY ARE DRAWN TO CUNNY, AND CUNNY IS SCARCE IN THESE ACCOUNTS.
...GLP... GLP...
I DON'T WANT TO KNOW. I DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS. OH GOD...
IN OUR NARRATIVES WE MAY SIGNIFY WITHOUT CONSTRAINT.
THUS DO I PRESENT AS OF A TYPE AND A CONVENTION TO RELIGION, THAT MY TRUER NATURE GOES MISUNDERSTOOD.
...GLP...
I HAVE TO GO. I HAVE TO GO...
...YET UNTO ALL MEN IS THE WOUND OF WOMAN MADE MARVEL AND TERROR BOTH, BEING THE FRIGHTFUL SMILE OF THEIR CREATOR...

CAN I... HEE HEE HEE...
CAN I TAKE YOU ANYWHERE?

HHHHHH...

"...AND IT WAS, IT WAS THE SAME CAR THAT BROUGHT ME INTO TOWN, THE OXBLOOD BUICK ROADSTER, PARKED RIGHT THERE. I MEAN, HOW COULD IT...
"ANYWAY, I JUST, I JUST RAN. I FOUND YOUR ADDRESS, HERE IN ORANGE STREET, AND I..."
"YES, YES. LOOK, YOU'VE CLEARLY HAD A FRIGHT..."
"H-HECTOR? WHO IS IT?"

IT'S JUST MR. BLACK, THE NICE YOUNG MAN I RAN INTO AT COLLEGE WHO I TOLD YOU ABOUT.
MR. BLACK, THIS IS MY COLLEAGUE, JAMES MONTAGUE.
IT SEEMS MR. BLACK'S HAD A BEASTLY TIME AT GOFFS FALLS...
I... I-I FEEL SO STUPID. I-I MEAN, IT WAS JUST... JUST SOME DREAM, I GUESS, BUT...
...BUT, I MEAN, I SAW THE CAR, THE BUICK, THERE IN GOFFS FALLS. THAT WAS REAL...
...THOUGH MANCHESTER'S HARDLY A BIG TOWN, AND EVERYONE HAS TO PARK SOMEWHERE.
YOU'RE PROBABLY OVERWORKED AND LETTING THINGS PREY ON YOUR NERVES. STILL, YOU'D BE WELCOME TO STAY WITH US FOR A FEW DAYS...
H-HECTOR, WE SHOULDN'T...
JAMES, YOU KNEW THAT THESE THINGS HAPPENED HERE, BUT WHEN I SUGGESTED BOSTON, YOU INSISTED ON MANCHESTER.
SO WHEN A VULNERABLE, HEALTHY YOUNG FIGURE DELIVERS HIMSELF TO OUR DOOR SEEKING SHELTER, AREN'T YOU EVEN TEMPTED TO DO THE OBVIOUS THING?
W-WELL, I SUPPOSE...
OH, GOD. I-I LEFT MY RAINCOAT AT THE HOUSE...
OH, DEAR. WELL, IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GO BACK AND GET IT, A RAINCOAT'S EASILY REPLACED.
NOW, DO COME IN. SORRY ABOUT THE FORMALDEHYDE. IT'S A HOBBY... TAXIDERMY, RESTORATIONS, THAT SORT OF THING.
I-I'M JUST REALLY GRATEFUL TO BOTH OF YOU FOR TAKING ME IN.
I'D UNDERSTAND IF YOU WERE CAUTIOUS.

I-I MEAN, FOR ALL YOU KNOW I COULD BE SOME DANGEROUS MANIAC, SEEING AS YOU ONLY MET ME THIS MORNING...
THIS MORNING? OH, YOU POOR BOY, YOU HAVE BEEN SHAKEN UP, HAVEN'T YOU?
NEVER MIND. YOU'VE COME HERE TO YOUR WELL-EARNED REST.
WE'LL SOON PUT SOME COLOR BACK IN YOUR CHEEKS AND HAVE YOU FEELING ANIMATED AGAIN.
BY THE TIME YOU'RE BACK IN NEW YORK, YOU'LL BE RAISING THE ROOF IN GREENWICH VILLAGE AND CAROUSING FIT TO WAKE...
AHM... YOU KNOW. WHOEVER.
ANYWAY, CAN I GET YOU A DRINK?
PLEASE, LET'S ALL MAKE OURSELVES COMFORTABLE...
Providence

even so I'm still in something of a funk. I certainly don't dare attempt to get to sleep, at least not for a while, by which point I'll have hopefully calmed down a little. Writing it all down will help to fill the time up until then, and it might also help me get a clearer picture in my head of all the day's peculiar events...or is it me that's getting more peculiar, with events the same way that they've always been? To be quite truthful this is actually a serious consideration. Reading through my earlier entries in this commonplace book and attempting to see things with an objective eye as if it wasn't me who'd written them, I have to come to the conclusion that somebody else would probably deduce that I was going through some manner of protracted mental breakdown after Lily's suicide. Perhaps I am, but then how would I know? The strange things I've imagined recently, beginning with my gas-afflicted nightmare glimpse of 'caverns measureless to man' extending under Robert Suydam's house and then my childish fears when I was walking back to Athol after my encounter with the Wheatleys, right through to this latest bout of girlish panic at Goffs Falls... it doesn't sound like me the way I used to be, the kind of life I used to have. I always used to be so clear and reasoned about everything but, I don't know, it seems like all I needed was for one bad thing to happen and to make me step outside New York, and now I'm feeling sort of lost. But then, what am I going to do? I'm feeling bad because of what amounts to some bad dreams and a few jitters that you might expect from somebody who'd lost their lover in the way that I lost mine. I ought to be more worried if I wasn't going through some sort of crisis; if I was the kind of person who could go through something like that happening and not react at all. This is a normal process that I'm going through, and I'd be a much bigger idiot than I thought I was if I allowed some morbid fantasies to scare me off so that I hightailed it back to Manhattan. What I have to do is take charge of myself, to recognise these nervous spasms for the outpourings of grief and guilt they truly are. These things take time, and I should be more patient with myself. I have a real strong feeling that things will get better soon, and I'll reach a position where I'm not thrown into a pathetic panic by events like those that saw me land up in a stranger's house past midnight, babbling like a lunatic. Speaking of which, I really ought to outline how this whole ludicrous business came about, if only so that I can laugh about it in a month of two's time when I'm hopefully a little further on towards recovery.

I checked out of the Pequoig at around eight-thirty, fortunately without any untoward encounters with Miss "Who's Stravinsky", and caught the nine-

fifteen bus to Bedford as I'd hoped I would. There isn't much to say about the journey, except that I seem to be developing a strange sort of affinity for the New England scenery. After New York, stone-gray and flat and modern, it's so green and engagingly irregular and old. From the bus window I'd catch glimpses of those lonely little houses crouching shy amongst the trees or clinging to the hills like barnacles. Some of them had the funny Dutch roofs that I've seen around these parts with long sides that are almost sheer, which I should learn the proper name of if I'm serious about this novel on the region (as I'm now surer than ever that I am). These isolated buildings, some of them in ruins, sparked off every kind of speculation in me about who might live there or what scenes those crumbling walls and empty windows might have witnessed in the dim colonial past. This countryside, that seems to hold the shadows and the light so well, would be the very place to be a writer. I can see how Hawthorne found his inspiration here so long ago, and why Eugene O'Neill and all his pals chose this neck of the woods to build their playhouse. It isn't just the setting, obviously: it's the characters that seem to grow like some exotic vegetation from the landscape here.

As an example, when we reached the bus depot in Bedford I was squinting hopelessly at out-of-date timetables, trying to figure out the quickest way that I could get to Manchester. I must have been the perfect picture of a clueless out-of-towner, because as I stood there looking no doubt pitiful and lost a passing automobile shuddered to a halt there at the curb beside me, a long Buick Roadster that looked nearly new, in an unusual oxblood-brown. Behind the wheel was just about the oddest duck I've ever met... or at least since I visited the Wheatley residence a fortnight back. He was a funny sharp-faced little fellow in a flat cap and I guessed him to have been around his fifties or his sixties. His voice was high and nasal with an accent that I couldn't put my finger on, and he kept snickering with every other sentence as if he were having just about the most fun of his life. He said it looked like I was lost and asked me where it was that I was headed. When I told him I was hoping to reach Manchester he snickered fit to bust and said that that was where he lived, and if I wanted he could take me there. He also said "It's where I live but it ain't where I'm from", which I took as a confirmation that his accent hailed from somewhere further east.

Inside the car — and I'm afraid that there's no charitable way to put this — it stank to high heaven, sort of musky like the hamster that the Johnson

brothers down the street kept, back home in Milwaukee, even though the vehicle looked almost new. I was sure glad when the jalopy started moving and the brisk breeze aired out the interior a little. With his darting, beady eyes aglitter and his posture in the driver's seat apparently uncomfortable and unaccustomed, he informed me that his name was Jenkins and that he lived with his mother in the southern end of Manchester, right near the border between Massachusetts and New Hampshire. This prosaic admission served to bring about another burst of adenoidal tittering, which I'm afraid to say that I joined in with without understanding what was meant to be so funny. I suppose that I was grateful for the ride and trying to ingratiate myself with the old codger, a bad journalistic habit that I seem to have picked up. Sometimes I can be such a fake. Maybe the main point of this whole New England expedition is to have something authentic, some real object in a life that sometimes feels so like pretence or hollow pantomime; so ghostly after Lillian.

I'm not sure if I genuinely fell asleep when I was sitting there beside him in the Buick, or if that was just part of a dream I had about it later, but I realised suddenly that we were driving through a thunderstorm, with folks running for cover at the edges of the road. Another funny thing — it looked to me like all the trees down there south-west of Manchester were turning gold as though we were already in September, although when we later reached the town it was all summer greenery, so maybe I imagined it. The rain appeared to stop as suddenly as it had started, and when Mr. Jenkins dropped me off outside Saint Anselm College on the hill only a short while later there weren't even any puddles left in view. These lapses are the things which make me worry that I might be in a bad way psychologically, still yet to come to terms with feeling guilty about what happened to Lily and, in compensation, working myself far too hard as diagnosed by Dr. North, of whom more presently.

Saint Anselm is a dignified turn-of-the-century affair, a modern building with an eye to history and tradition, making it appear more venerable that it is in actuality, and one of the most well-appointed institutions that I've come across on my New England sojourn. The uneasy undertones I fancied I detected were no doubt just that, queasy imaginings provoked by having spent the last hour cramped and in the heady atmosphere of Mr. Jenkins' company. Making my way into the rather grand Alumni Hall, enquiries led me to the current Head of Languages, a personable if possibly over-jovial Catholic priest named Father Race. He seemed all too aware of Hali's Book, but told me that

Saint Anselm's chief librarian, a Dr. Wantage, is away until next week and that I'm going to have to wait for him to get back if I want to see the volume. This is an annoyance, obviously, but I have to get used to the fact that things don't happen at the same pace out here as they do back in New York. When it became apparent that I'd have to spend a night or two in Manchester, Race mentioned that student accommodation was available at nearby Goffs Falls and suggested that I try there.

Making my farewells I was about to leave the college when a fussy-looking fellow in his forties captured my attention by remarking on my New York accent, which I really didn't think was that pronounced. Blond and be-spectacled with something very boyish in the look of him, he introduced himself as Dr. Hector North, a one-time student at Saint Anselm who now works as an assistant in the medical department. Talking to him it turns out that we have a few things in common, and he very generously said that if I couldn't find a place to stay in Goffs Falls I should call on him and his companion at their house on Orange Street in central Manchester. He pointed me towards a bridge across the Merrimack and wished me a good day.

I made my own way down the slope towards the river, and I was half-way across the bridge that Dr. North had pointed out when I had one of the most thoroughly uplifting interchanges of my trip thus far. Given that I am something of an imbecile at following directions I was unsure of which path to take along the Merrimack's east bank, and so approached this tiny little schoolgirl who was crossing in the opposite direction, asking if she knew the way to Goffs Falls. Looking back I guess that I was quite an ass about it, talking to her as if she were a slow-witted eight year-old, but I'm darned if she didn't put me in my place. She gave me a good dressing-down, informing me that at a most precocious thirteen years she was already studying at Saint Anselm, and that I'd therefore no call to treat her like a child. I swear that with her diction and vocabulary it was just like talking to a little adult, and I made immediate sincere apologies for condescending to her how I had. She seemed to warm to me a little after that and told me that her name was Elspeth, recommending lodgings in Goffs Falls she knew of that were run by somebody called Mrs. Macey and obligingly enlightening me on how I could get there. The one slightly sour note that was struck was when I mentioned Dr North, whom Elspeth seemed to think had an unhealthy reputation, something I attribute to the prejudices which the young and uninformed can sadly often

harbour towards those they see as different. That aside, though, meeting Elspeth was a tonic. I don't wish to seem like a 'stuffed shirt' but there's been something both slightly disturbing and distressing about many of the people I've encountered in my travels, starting out with Mr. Suydam and including all the oddities I met in Salem along with the Wheatleys outside Athol. Elspeth was a breath of fresh air after all of that, a bright and normal child who hasn't had time yet to get infected by that dark and damp New England spirit. We said our goodbyes, and I think I was even whistling as I carried on to Goffs Falls on my own.

It was late afternoon by the time I arrived there, and without a lot of residential dwellings in the place to pick from I got lucky first time by just knocking on the front door of the oldest-looking house and taking things from there. The door was answered by a perfectly presentable and nice old lady who when I enquired announced that she herself was Mrs. Macey and that she indeed had got an attic room to let for a few days to needy and deserving causes such as I. The room itself, once we'd ascended to it by the crooked and confounding stairway ~~the~~ that one tends to find in buildings of that age, was pretty awful, though I reasoned that I only need endure it until Dr. Wantage had returned to the Saint Anselm library. Beggars can't be choosers and all that, although I could have done without the gaping rat-holes in the skirting boards, blocked up by nothing more substantial than some crumpled newspaper. To make things worse, either subsidence or some warping of the ancient house's timbers had conspired to give the walls and ceilings of the garret an unsettling seasick tilt, as if the bygone builders of the premises were strangers to the spirit-level and conventional geometry in general. Though I agreed to take the room, I found its listing confines too oppressive after only a few moments and decided that I might as well investigate the area around Goffs Falls while there was still some daylight left. I'd heard from Father Race up at Saint Anselm that there was some sort of federal investigation going on into what sounded like a meteoric crash-site in the close vicinity, so once I'd offloaded my luggage I went back downstairs and asked my silver-haired landlady if she knew how I could get to somewhere Father Race had told me was called Sebbins Brook. As it turned out it was just a short way across the river and into the hilly farmland to the west of Manchester, so I decided that it wouldn't hurt to take a stroll and enjoy more of the beguiling natural beauties of New England.

What I found past Sebbins Brook, as it transpires, is neither beautiful nor natural: there's a generous swathe of land with the remains of an old farmhouse in the middle of it, but a more diseased and blighted place I never hope to see. As Father Race had mentioned, there were federal men out there collecting samples of the soil, if you can call it that, and making measurements. I got to chatting with the senior agent, a tight-lipped and taciturn sort by the name of Stubbs who seemed so fed up and disgruntled with the job he'd been assigned that he was willing to talk openly with me, even once I'd admitted that I used to be a journalist. According to the agent, the whole property—now bluish-grey and dead from edge to edge—was once a thriving farm owned by a family named Forester, until the meteorite-strike in the early summer months of 1882 when something in the rock from space had poisoned and killed everything, including all the Foresters. The agent said that Father Denis Mary Bradley, who would later be both ordained bishop and call for the founding of Saint Anselm College, visited the farm with two church benefactors to inspect the meteorite and take it off for further study, where apparently the meteorite evaporated without trace. The center of the worst contagion was the well, in which what is believed to have been ordinary moss had been transmogrified into a leprous growth that colonised the well and its surroundings with a startling rapidity before completely withering away to leave a desiccated and discoloured sprawl, resembling nothing more than a gigantic octopus or spider that had been squashed flat or otherwise deflated. I stood talking to the agent as dusk settled in across the hills and a first-quarter crescent moon rose in the east, and he passed on the governmental rumor that the powers-that-be are seemingly considering erecting huge protective domes over the major towns and cities to keep out whatever unknown dust or gas can kill the land like this, in case somebody ever figures out a way to use this natural disaster as some kind of weapon.

It's just struck me as I'm writing this—is there some kind of a connection between this Manchester meteorite disaster and the business that old Garland Wheatley seemed to be in such a temper over, all of that unfathomable stuff he mentioned about how the Stella Sapiente had "brung down the stone"? I seem to have a memory of Wheatley saying this had happened during 1882, although I may of course have misremembered. If this stone and the Manchester meteorite are actually one and the same then obviously he can't have meant they brought it down from space, but what if he was trying to

imply that people from the order, whom for all I know might be the same church benefactors Father Bradley took out to the farm, had somehow misappropriated the apparently unusual meteorite and "brung it down" to Massachusetts or Rhode Island from New Hampshire for the group to use in some way? I should go back through this book and check my earlier notes to see if they make any of this clearer, although I'm not in the mood for that right now, for reasons I'll explain.

I took my leave of Agent Stubbs and wandered back to Goffs Falls through the gathering twilight, which was definitely chillier than how the weather's been these last few evenings, almost as if to remind us that the summer's nearly over. Back at Mrs. Macey's house I let myself in with the old iron key she'd issued me with earlier. There wasn't any sign of her around the place, but then she'd told me when I took my walk out to the meteorite site that I might not see her later. I assume that she'd already gone to bed, off in whatever room was hers elsewhere within that convoluted house. It was a little early in the evening, to be sure, but then the elderly have different sleeping patterns to the young — and even I was feeling virtually exhausted after my first day in Manchester, which I attribute to the country air and the unusual amount of walking I've been doing. Thus enfeebled I determined I should hit the sack myself, and made my way up Heaven knows how many flights of narrow and uneven stairs to my high garret room. If anything, the slanting and off-kilter boundaries of my bedchamber were even more subtly stomach-turning and headache-inducing in the gathering darkness than they'd appeared by broad daylight, and it was a great relief to climb into the faintly musty-smelling cot and close my eyes — or at least, such was my assumption.

The next thing I know (and bear in mind that I've since reasoned all the following must have been and unusually complex and persistent dream, and merely set it down here as a record of what seemed to me to be occurring at the time) I was back in the car with Mr. Jenkins and we were approaching Manchester exactly as I'd actually been doing earlier that day. This startling experience felt so immediately real and exact in all its details that my first assumption was that I'd rudely dozed off during my journey, and had somehow dreamed all the foregoing visit to Saint Anselm; meeting Father Race and Dr. North and little Elspeth; coming to Goffs Falls and visiting the poisoned farmland and so on and so on, in the way that multitudinous events may be compressed into a dream of only a few minutes genuine duration. I was

dazedly attempting to exelain all this to Mr. Jenkins when he seemed to take on a particularly sinister and threatening aspect, snickering and saying something about being in a maze I couldn't see. I was just about to ask him what he meant when risen wavering and twitching in the space between the driver's seat and mine there was a huge, repulsive rat's-tail that was three or four feet long, grey and segmented like a worm, with horrid bristles and apparently a part of Mr. Jenkins! This, you may be sure, gave me some fright and shocked me wide awake there in my attic bed, but my immense relief that the whole episode had only been a dream would prove to be short-lived.

With a sensation of the utmost sinking dread I heard the voice of my landlady, Mrs. Macey, speaking to me in a kind of lifeless monotone from only a few feet away. I sat there on the bed's edge and as my eyes gradually adjusted to the gloom I made out the old woman, who was sitting on a creaking wooden chair down at the skewed room's further end with something cradled in her arms, and whom, after a momentary failure to believe what I was witnessing, I realised didn't have a stitch of clothing on. A host of ludicrous ideas raced through my mind as I attempted to make sense of what was happening, and were as readily discarded: could it be that Mrs. Macey was a sleep-walker who had wandered through her house from her own room to mine without having awareness of what she was doing? Or – a hideous thought – was she in truth a desperate and depraved seductress who was making an attempt to force her animal attentions on me? I know this all sounds ridiculous, and even reading back what I've just written makes me laugh but in the middle of the night it wasn't at all funny. As I sat there staring at the nude old lady she was going through a dreary recitation that I didn't understand, but which for some impenetrable reason scared the living daylights out of me. Improbably, it seemed to be a discourse on mathematics or geometry, but spoken by a simple-minded rural woman, in that eerie and unlikely manner that dreams have. I think it was around this point when I became aware that Mrs. Macey was breast-feeding something, holding it against her bosom as she sat there in the chair to an accompaniment of small and horribly suggestive liquid noises.

Much as it distresses me to think that such a hideous and unprecedented thought might have arisen from my dreaming mind, I realised with a lurch of terror and revulsion that the "baby" which the naked crone was suckling so attentively was the same Mr. Jenkins who had driven me to Manches-

ter, horrifically reduced in scale, his sharply-featured head and liver-spotted hands now growing from the hateful body of a greatly enlarged rat or ferret of some kind. By now I was in a condition of uncomprehending fright and pulling on my clothes in a blind panic, fairly frantic to get out of that appalling place as quickly as was possible. The sleepy, satisfied look in the nursing creature's nasty little eyes was literally unbearable, but it was what the elderly landlady was intoning that made me most eager to be gone from there. Her dismal monologue, though quite beyond my comprehension in its references to Euclid and the like, nevertheless suggested a compelling knowledge which, if I were but to understand the slightest part of it, would utterly undo my life and reason both. It isn't easy to explain, except to say I had a feeling that, once heard, this was the kind of knowledge that could not be put out of one's thoughts, and yet at the same time could not be lived with. I felt sure I had to quit the house before her mutterings started making sense to me, or be forever cursed in some way and forever haunted. Snatching up my suitcase and with hat jammed hastily onto my uncombed head, I bounded down the crooked stairs two at a time, hurtling breathless out through the front door into the brightly moonlit night like a scared child.

And then — I swear I'm not embroidering all this — the oxblood Buick Roadster that had given me a ride to Manchester pulls up beside the curb ahead of me, and Mr. Jenkins, once more in his flat cap and conventional attire, leans out through the side window, snickering, to ask if he could take me anywhere. And then I finally woke up for real (at least I hope I did) to find myself back in my attic room, but this time without naked Mrs. Macey suckling her weasel-baby at the room's far end. However, having thought myself to be awake ~~or~~ on the two previous occasions, I was not prepared to take the chance. (I see now my half-witted lack of logic: if I was no longer dreaming, what had I to fear, and if I was still dreaming what good would it do to take imaginary flight from an imaginary house?) Dressing with a tremendous haste in what was an unsettling repetition of my earlier dream-actions, I fled down the stairs and out through the front door into the moonlight-flooded stillness of Goffs Falls, just as before...and there, parked by the curb in the exact place it had pulled up in my dream, was Mr. Jenkins' oxblood Buick Roadster!! Now, I've had it pointed out since that Manchester isn't that large as towns go, and that this isn't anywhere near as uncanny a coincidence as it would be back in New York. While I accept that, I contend that there is not sufficient

logic in the world to soothe the terrors that coursed through me as I stood there gaping like a codfish at that mercifully empty car. Heart in my mouth, I ran the mile or two beside the moonlit river that delivered me to central Manchester, where I was able to locate the residence of Dr. North in Orange Street here by examining the folded piece of paper bearing his address that he'd slipped to me earlier today.

That's where I'm writing this, in the guest bedroom of the house that Hector — Dr. North's first name — shares with his close friend Mr. Montague, still trying to get over my embarrassment at having woken them by hammering madly on their door at an ungodly hour and telling them I'd had a bad dream, as if I were only five years old and these near-strangers were my father and my mother. Having promised that he'd take me in if things at Goffs Falls didn't go the way I'd hoped, I guess poor, kindly Dr. North was left with little choice but to make good upon his offer, although Mr. Montague was clearly less than pleased by my intrusion. Hector, trying to be helpful, said he should go back to bed and leave the two of us to sit up talking until Hector had made sure I was relieved of all my fears. Rather than being grateful Mr. Montague grew rather waspish, saying that he knew full well what that meant and that he would not retire before his friend did, seemingly unwilling that we should be left alone together. Dr. North protested, whereon Montague said rather testily "I know you, Hector, and I've see that look before. Now, let's show your young friend to the spare room and leave him to his own devices while both of us try to get some shuteye. I think we've had quite enough excitement for one evening, don't you?" Not wanting to be the cause of any argument ~~of~~ or scene between them, I said diplomatically that I'd already inconvenienced them more than adequately. Reassuring Dr. North that I was perfectly recovered, I insisted he and Mr. Montague should leave me on my own, safe in the knowledge that I'd not be having any further ghastly nightmares.

I just wish that I was half as confident of that as I professed to be. I'm sitting here now, wide awake, and unsure if that's simply due to having scared myself into a nervous frenzy of alertness or if it would be more honest to admit that I'm afraid to go to sleep. In either instance I'm left as a victim of insomnia, penning these pages in a vain attempt to either bore myself into unconsciousness or at least fill the long hours until dawn productively. I have to say the atmosphere of Dr. North's house isn't helping much at soothing my disquiet. There's a faint smell of formaldehyde — and something else, a sweet scent I

can't readily identify – that lingers over everything, which Dr. North explained when I arrived was a result of his experiments in taxidermy; one of the good doctor's cherished hobbies and enthusiasms, it appears, although I don't see any of his work displayed around the house. I know that when one's in the world of medicine like Dr. North things like embalming fluid must become so commonplace and normal as to go unnoticed, but for squeamish New York sissies like myself I fear they'll always have a connotation of the ghoulish or macabre. I know I'm suffering from a bad case of the jumps but Dr. North seems so determined and so driven that I could, right at this moment, easily imagine that he was a second Baron Frankenstein or something, making severed legs twitch through the application of a galvanizing current. Aren't I just the most tremendous sap?

It strikes me that if I'm in such a febrile and imaginative mood I ought to take advantage of it with some serious writing exercises or at least a few ideas for stories, if only to demonstrate that I'm not treating this here commonplace book solely as a journal to record my most recent attacks of jitters! Maybe I should roll my sleeves up and attempt at least an opening practice-paragraph or two of this confounded novel I'm pretending to be writing. Let's see how it looks.

Marblehead: An American Undertow

By Robert D. Black

Iron green, the grand machinery of the Atlantic grates foam gears against New England with the rhythmic thunder of industrial percussion. A fine dust of other lands and foreign histories is carried in suspension on its lurching, slopping mechanism: shards of bright green glass from Ireland scoured blunt and opaque by brine, or sodden splinters of armada out of Spain. The debris of an older world, a driftwood of ideas and people often changed beyond all recognition by their passage, clatters on the tideline pebbles to deposit unintelligible grudges, madnesses and visions in a rank high-water mark, a silt of fetid dreams that further decompose amid the stranded kelp or bladder-wrack and pose risk of infection. Puritans escaping England's murderous civil war cast broad-brimmed shadows onto rocks where centuries of moss obscured the primitive horned figures etched by vanished tribes, and after

them came the displaced political idealists of many nations, the religious outcasts, cults and criminals, to cling with grim determination to a damp and verdant landscape until crushed by drink or the insufferable weight of their accumulated expectations. Royalist cavaliers that fled from Cromwell's savage interregnum and then, where their puritanical opponents settled the green territories to the east, elected instead to establish themselves deep in a more temperate South, bestowing their equestrian concerns, their courtly mannerisms and their hairstyles upon an adopted homeland. Heretics and conjurors who sought new climes past the long shadow of the stake; transported killers and procurers with their slates wiped clean in pastures where nobody knew them; sour-faced visionaries clutching Bunyan's chapbook to their bosoms as a newer and more speculative bible, come to these shores searching for a literal New Jerusalem and finding only different wilderness in which to lose themselves and different game or adversaries for the killing. All of these and more, bearing concealed agendas and a hundred diverse afterlives, crashed as a human surf on Plymouth Rock to fling their mortal spray across the unsuspecting country, individuals incendiary in that having lost ancestral homelands they were without further longings to relinquish. Their remains, ancient and sinister, impregnate and inform the factory-whistle furrows of oblivious America.

And now that mulch of dead imaginings beneath the feet of Temperance ladies, union-affiliated Vaudevillians and maimed men home from Europe has contaminated the groundwater of the upstart country's nightmares. Immigrants in their illimitable difference come to seem a separate species, taciturn and fish-eyed as though risen from the ocean waves that bore them in their transport, monstrous in their self-contained communities with bitter scents and indecipherable ululations, names unsettlingly unpronounceable. Ensconced at isolated farms where beaten track is naught save idle rumour stagnant families nurse grievance, dreadful secrets and deformity in solitude; pools of declined humanity entirely unconnected to society by any tributary, where ancestral prejudice or misconception may become the plaint of generations. Fabled and forbidden works of Arab alchemy are handed down across years cruel and volatile, trafficked between austere colonial homes by charitable fellowships with ancient affectations or conveyed by fevered sea-captains, fugitive Huguenots or elderly hysterics formally accused of witchcraft. Young America, a sapling power grown suddenly so tall upon its diet of nickelodeons and motorcars, has sunk unwitting roots into an underworld of grotesque notions and

archaic creeds, their fearful pull discernible below the weed-cracked sidewalk. Buried and forgotten, ominous philosophies await their day with hideous patience.

Well! I think that's pretty darned good for a first attempt. A little overwrought, perhaps, and I'm not sure about the style – I can't decide if it's too modern or it's too old-fashioned, but perhaps that's a good sign. Of course, I guess I'll have to introduce a plot and characters at some point, but I'll wrestle with that minor nuisance when I get to it. Perhaps I could contrive to have some hobo, maybe literally a hoe-boy or travelling itinerant farm labourer who's wandering from place to place around New England in the search for work; somebody who might reasonably become involved with all the various characters I'm hoping to investigate. Being a labourer, while it would lend a feasibility to any action or exertion that I wanted in the story, wouldn't mean that my protagonist was lacking in intelligence or education: this is often economically a far from certain country for a lot of people, and there's plenty of smart fellows – maybe even an aspiring writer like myself – who've found themselves leaving their homes and families to mooch around from farm to farm in hope of some hay-baling or fruit-picking that's unlikely to materialise. Perhaps a character like that, a rugged man who is sufficiently well read to justifiably allow me a few literary flourishes (and I can't help thinking that I'll probably end up by casting some imagined variant of Tom Malone) would be the kind of sympathetic hero and the kind of voice I'm looking for. Meanwhile I yawned a moment or two back, and while I'm not yet quite exhausted to the point where I can guarantee a deep and dreamless sleep, perhaps another six or seven vague ideas for stories might just do the soporific job:

What if a man stays at an old New England house and has peculiar dreams where he's in the same building but in the 17th century, during the witch trials? Possibly his dreams are memories of a previous life, perhaps as a notorious Salem judge or magistrate? If I remember rightly, this might be the sort of narrative where some research into Nathaniel Hawthorne might not go amiss. Don't I recall him having some kind of familial connection to Salem's judiciary, possibly even links with the presiding judges at the witch trials? I'll have to look it up and find out if I'm right. I must say that if I attempted something about

witches after my preposterous imaginary exploits of this evening, I'd most likely be a lot less sympathetic to the idea of poor, persecuted women and more inclined to think that those who painted them as terrifying sorceresses working unimaginable evil had the more persuasive point of view. No, that's not really true. I still think that the witch trials were just as barbaric as I ever did, but I suppose I'm saying that if even I, an educated 20th century individual, am prepared to credit that my landlady might be a witch after a mere run of bad dreams, one can imagine how much more convincing the idea would be if broadcast in 17th century Salem. I just yawned again. A good sign.

Ideas of the fourth dimension and its strange geometry suggest that there are "corners" of reality which may be in a higher mathematic space and thus not evident to our perceptions. Possibility of some near-unimaginable infestation or some form of frightful vermin that inhabit these invisible extremities the way that rats will nest unseen behind a skirting board.

A meteor falls from the sky in some remote backwater, turning everything it touches into a bizarrely transformed alien landscape. Turns out meteor is actually completely unanticipated form of life from elsewhere in the cosmos, sent to make all worlds it comes across compatible with the conditions on the ghastly planet of its origin.

Could there be a place with different laws of form and different manners of perception in which living creatures would appear as something different, say as cubes or triangles or streams of ~~bo~~ bubbles?

That last one doesn't even make the slightest sense two minutes after writing it. I think I'm finally beginning to nod off and thus will leave more notes until the morning – that's assuming that I don't wake up embalmed from breathing all these fumes!

CHAPTER 6

"Now I found myself upon an apparently abandoned road which I had chosen as the shortest cut to Arkham; overtaken by the storm at a point far from any town..."

—'The Picture in the House', December 12, 1920

whereby the Redeemer shall know him, for black is the
messenger, and black is his path. A scribe is he, like to the
Thoth of antient Khem, and has strange instruments of glass
and metal. He is come out from a country distant and remote in
time, where sparks fly everywhere about and silvered visions of
may be conjured readily, for he is emissary to a
...WHILE HE'S ASLEEP? YOU WEREN'T ALWAYS SUCH A LITTLE OLD LADY.
HECTOR, I FORBID IT. YOU INDULGE YOURSELF WITH THESE MEN, THEY END UP FOLLOWING US AROUND...
OH, DON'T START DIGGING UP OLD GRIEVANCES.
JAMES, THIS IS A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY, AND BY TOMORROW IT WILL BE TOO LATE! NOBODY KNOWS HE'S HERE...
WE CAN'T BE SURE. SOMEBODY MIGHT HAVE SEEN YOU TALKING TO HIM AT THE COLLEGE.
table of the Aglo Letters that they may be
G
D
H
T
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K
TZ
WHAT IF THEY DID? THEY'LL HAVE FORGOTTEN BY NOW.
LOOK, OBVIOUSLY THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM, DRINK OR SOMETHING. NOBODY WILL MISS...
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND PLAIN LANGUAGE? A SCANDAL HERE IN MANCHESTER COULD FINISH US. NOW GO TO SLEEP.
WE CAN DISCUSS THIS IN THE MORNING.
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE SO PRISSY ABOUT EVERYTHING? YOU KNOW THAT BY THEN WE'LL BE...
I *SAID* "IN THE MORNING".

THIS IS GREAT. I CAN'T THANK YOU FELLERS ENOUGH FOR LENDING ME YOUR SPARE ROOM LAST NIGHT.
I STILL DON'T BELIEVE I LET BAD DREAMS SCARE ME AWAY FROM GOFFS FALLS...
OH, IT'S OUR PLEASURE. I HOPE THE HASH ISN'T OVERDONE. I MAY HAVE LEFT IT ON THE STOVE FOR TOO LONG...
HM. I'M AFRAID JAMES ISN'T ONE FOR ATTENDING TO MATTERS *PROMPTLY*, ARE YOU, DEAR?
VI: OUT OF TIME

NO, I SUPPOSE NOT.
I SUPPOSE I'M MORE OF A ONE FOR LETTING THINGS REST.
WELL, I SURE GOT PLENTY OF REST LAST NIGHT, ALTHOUGH I THINK I HAD SOME DREAMS. SOMETHING ABOUT A BOOK...
PROBABLY THE ONE I'M PLANNING TO WRITE. MAYBE IT'S AN OMEN THAT I SHOULD PRESS ON REGARDLESS.
NOT THAT I... GLP...
NOT THAT I HAVE A LOT OF CHOICE. MY JOB AND MY ROOM IN NEW YORK WILL BOTH BE GONE BY NOW.
I'VE LEFT IT A LITTLE LATE TO START PANICKING OVER NIGHTMARES.
UH... WELL, YOU DON'T NEED TO BE IN NEW YORK TO HAVE FUN, DO YOU?
HOW DO YOU MEAN?
I MEAN JAMES WILL BE OUT OF THE HOUSE THIS AFTERNOON.
IF YOU WANTED WE COULD MEET UP HERE, SPEND SOME TIME TOGETHER, PLAY SOME GAMES...
HECTOR? HECTOR, IS THERE SOMEBODY AT THE FRONT DOOR?
UM...
WELL, HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW? I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING. I WAS HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH ROBERT...
OH, WELL, I WOULDN'T WANT TO INTERRUPT THAT. I GUESS I'LL JUST GO ANSWER IT MYSELF.
HOLD ON! I WON'T BE A MOMENT!

HECTOR, THAT'S VERY SWEET. ACTUALLY, I'D PLANNED ON VISITING SAINT ANSELM THIS MORNING. I KNOW THAT LIBRARIAN ISN'T BACK YET, BUT...
SO? YOU COULD CALL HERE AROUND NOON. JUST DON'T TELL ANYBODY... YOU KNOW, IN CASE IT GETS BACK TO JAMES.
TAKING A BREAK FROM WORK, IT'S NOT LIKE IT WOULD KILL YOU.
WELL, I GUESS WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT. I MEAN, I... I HAVE BEEN UNDER A LOT OF STRAIN LATELY...
OH, WELL, I PROMISE TO RELIEVE YOU OF THAT BEFORE YOU KNOW IT. I'M WELL KNOWN FOR...
JAMES? WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHO WAS AT THE...?
A STUDENT. HECTOR, WE HAVE TO TALK.
A STUDENT? JAMES, YOU LOOK AWFUL. WHAT DID HE SAY? YOU KNOW I HAVEN'T...
I-IT WAS ONE OF THE GIRLS. SH-SHE SAID THERE'D BEEN A LETTER RECEIVED AT THE COLLEGE, ASKING ABOUT US.
HECTOR, YOU'D... YOU'D BETTER COME IN HERE.
A-AND CLOSE THE DOOR, WON'T YOU?

OH, THERE YOU ARE. I WAS JUST LOOKING AT...
LISTEN, I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE TO *LEAVE.* WE'RE, WE'RE LEAVING OURSELVES. TH-THERE ARE THINGS THAT HAVE COME *UP*...
HECTOR, THINGS ARE *ALWAYS* COMING UP. AND WE KNOW WHOSE FAULT *THAT* IS, DON'T WE?
SUITCASES. WHERE DID I PUT THE SUITCASES...
I, UH... SURE. SURE, I CAN GET MY STUFF PACKED RIGHT AWAY.
LOOK, BEST OF LUCK WITH ALL THIS, WHATEVER IT IS. I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE, WHEN THERE'S BUSINESS YOU'D PREFER TO KEEP BURIED...
GOD, YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
HECTOR, HURRY THINGS *UP.* WE HAVE TO GET THE EQUIPMENT INTO *BOXES*...
WELL, I GUESS I'LL BE ON MY WAY. THANKS AGAIN FOR...
OUR PLEASURE, BUT YOU REALLY HAVE TO GO NOW. WE'VE GOT SUCH A LOT TO TAKE CARE OF...
NOW WHO'S NOT ATTENDING TO MATTERS PROMPTLY?
HECTOR, SHOULDN'T YOU BE CALLING THOSE *REMOVAL* PEOPLE IN BOSTON?

ELSPETH?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
MY ROOMS ARE NEARBY, LIKE I TOLD YOU. THAT'S WHY THE COLLEGE HAD ME DELIVER DR. NORTH'S MESSAGE.
SEEMS I MIGHT ASK WHAT *YOU'RE* DOING HERE, AFTER I DIRECTED YOU TO GOFF'S FALLS. GUESS I'M TOO LITTLE TO TAKE *NOTICE* OF.
I-IT ISN'T THAT, IT'S JUST... WELL, I LEFT GOFF'S FALLS IN THE NIGHT, WHEN I SCARED MYSELF. IT WAS STUPID.
LISTEN, WHY DID YOUR MESSAGE UPSET DR. NORTH SO MUCH?
I'M SURE I COULDN'T SAY. IT WAS JUST FROM SOME CANADIAN MILITARY GENTLEMAN.
WERE YOU VISITING SAINT ANSELM? I COULD WALK WITH YOU...

WHY, YES. I'D INTENDED TO. THAT WOULD BE NICE.
SO, WHAT WAS THIS CANADIAN FELLOW'S MESSAGE?
OH, IT WAS OLD ACQUAINTANCES OF DR. NORTH'S, TRYING TO TRACK HIM DOWN FOR A *REUNION.*
LOOK, I KNOW YOU'RE A NEWSPAPER MAN, BUT PLEASE DON'T INTERROGATE ME *ALL* THE WAY TO COLLEGE. IT'S A LONG *WALK.*
WELL, HERE WE ARE. YOU KNOW, I *THOUGHT* FALL WAS SETTLING IN EARLY WHEN I ARRIVED HERE, AND IT SEEMS I WAS RIGHT
YOU'RE JUST NOT USED TO THE PACE OF THINGS IN MANCHESTER.
ANYWAY, I HOPE YOU HAVE BETTER LUCK WITH SAINT ANSELM THIS TIME.
WHO KNOWS? PERHAPS I'LL SEE YOU LATER...
"...WALKED ME HERE FROM ORANGE STREET. CALLED *ELSPETH*, I DON'T KNOW IF YOU KNOW HER? SHE HAS TO BE THE YOUNGEST STUDENT HERE.
"AND SUCH A LITTLE GROWN-UP. SAINT ANSELM IS DOING A FINE JOB, FATHER RACE.
"NOW, I KNOW YOUR *LIBRARIAN* IS AWAY, BUT MIGHT I TOUR THE COLLEGE ANYWAY...?"

WHY, HANK WANTAGE HAS BEEN BACK FOR OVER A WEEK. I ONLY JUST PASSED HIM RIGHT DOWN THE HALL.
COME ON, I'LL TAKE YOU TO HIM... AND I'M GLAD YOU GOT TO MEET ELSPETH. GOOD SALEM FAMILY, THE WADES.
OVER A *WEEK?* BUT I THOUGHT YOU SAID...
I-I GUESS I MISUNDERSTOOD YOU...
OH, THAT'S PROBABLY MY FAULT. YOU'D THINK A HEAD OF LANGUAGES WOULD BE ABLE TO PUT THINGS *PLAINLY*, WOULDN'T YOU?
MYSELF, I BLAME THE COLLEGE. YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW MANY OF THE FACULTY WIND UP AS BABBLING OLD MEN.
SPEAKING OF WHICH, I THINK I SEE THE ONE THAT YOU WERE *LOOKING* FOR...
SAY, HANK? SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT THIS IS MR. BLACK, THE WRITER FROM NEW YORK I MENTIONED.
MR. BLACK, THIS IS DR. HENRY WANTAGE FROM OUR *LIBRARY*, AND DR. NAT PAISLEY, OUR HEAD OF POLITICAL *ECONOMY*.
UH... PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
LIKEWISE. LISTEN, DR. PAISLEY AND I WERE DISCUSSING *PERSONAL* MATTERS...
OH, NO. NO, THAT'S FINE. I-I WAS ALL DONE MOANING ABOUT MY PROBLEMS, ANYWAY.
UH, LOOK, REALLY, I DIDN'T WANT TO INTRUDE. I WAS JUST...
WELL, NAT, IF YOU'RE SURE. THE COMMOTION WITH ALICE WILL WORK OUT, YOU'LL SEE.
ALL RIGHT, MR. BLACK, THE LIBRARY'S IN AN ADJACENT BUILDING. YOU'D BEST FOLLOW ME...

LISTEN, I'M SORRY ABOUT IMPOSING LIKE THIS, WHILE YOU WERE TALKING TO YOUR COLLEAGUE...
PLEASE DON'T TROUBLE YOURSELF. TO BE BRUTALLY HONEST, I'M GLAD TO GET AWAY.
NAT PAISLEY ISN'T THE MOST CHEERFUL COMPANY. NOT HIS FAULT OF COURSE, POOR MAN, BUT STILL...
BACK IN '08 HE HAD A ***BREAKDOWN.*** AWFUL BUSINESS.
I'D JUST STARTED HERE. NEXT FIVE YEARS, NAT WAS LIKE ANOTHER ***PERSON.*** WIFE LEFT HIM; TOOK THE CHILDREN...
SIX YEARS BACK, HE RECOVERS. MEMORY A BLANK, BUT BY THEN... LIKE I SAY, TRAGIC CASE.
ANYWAY, WHAT OF YOU? FATHER RACE SAID YOU WERE AFTER ***HALI'S BOOK...***
THAT'S RIGHT. I'M RESEARCHING A NOVEL.
I HEARD ABOUT THE BOOK DURING MY POKING AROUND, THEN I LEARNED THAT YOU'D BEEN GIFTED WITH A COPY AT SAINT ***ANSELM...***
HUH. WE SURE WERE. SOON AFTER THE COLLEGE OPENED, AS I RECALL, AND SHORTLY BEFORE THE OLD LIBRARY BURNED DOWN.
BEFORE MY TIME, OF COURSE, BUT STUDENTS STILL WHISPER ABOUT IT.
REALLY? WELL, I GUESS HALI'S BOOK SURVIVING THE BLAZE MUST HAVE SEEMED PRETTY ***LUCKY.***
WHAT ABOUT THE GROUP WHO GAVE YOU IT, THE STELLA SAPIENTE? DO YOU KNOW THEM?
WELL, NOT PERSONALLY, THOUGH THEY CARRY QUITE A BIT OF WEIGHT AROUND HERE.
THERE'S A PICTURE OF THEM ON THE WALL BEHIND YOU...

HUM. WELL, SO THERE IS. I THINK I MIGHT EVEN *RECOGNIZE* A COUPLE OF THEM.
ON THE LEFT, THAT LOOKS LIKE GARLAND WHEATLEY AND... IS THAT HIS DAUGHTER NEXT TO HIM, LETICIA? SHE'S SO *YOUNG.*
I DON'T KNOW ANY OF THE OTHERS. WHO'S THE TALLER FELLOW, ON THE RIGHT?
RONALD UNDERWOOD PITMAN, PHOTOGRAPHER & PORTRAITIST
21, HENCHMAN STREET, NORTH END, BOSTON.
THAT'S EDGAR *WADE*, YOUNG ELSPETH'S FATHER. SADLY, HE PASSED ON WHEN SHE WAS BARELY EIGHT YEARS OLD.
I MUST SAY I'M SURPRISED YOU KNOW THE *WHEATLEYS.* NOT TOO WELL, I HOPE? HALI'S BOOK'S THIS WAY, INCIDENTALLY.
OH... RIGHT. THANKS.
I, UH, I VISITED THE WHEATLEYS' FARM IN *ATHOL.* THEY'RE, UH, THEY'RE CERTAINLY UNUSUAL...
THAT'S SOMETHING OF AN *UNDERSTATEMENT*, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE? 1913, OLD EDGAR WADE INSISTED WE SHOULD BAN THEM FROM THE *LIBRARY*...
AH. HERE WE ARE.
THAT'S IT, HUH? THE KITAB AL HIKMAH AL NAJMIYYA IN TRANSLATION? YOU SURE KEEP IT LOCKED AWAY SECURELY.
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE WORRIED THAT SOMEBODY MIGHT BREAK IN...

Hali's BOOKE OF The Wisdom OF The Stars
Translated into English By ROBERT TURNER, Philo-Mathes
LONDON.
YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT.
OR, CONVERSELY, THAT IT MIGHT BREAK *OUT.*
YOU CAN LOOK AT IT HERE, SO LONG AS YOU DON'T TAKE IT ANYWHERE.
NOW, MR. BLACK, I MUST ADVISE YOU TO BE VERY CAREFUL WITH THIS BOOK...
AM I ALLOWED TO TAKE NOTES? I'VE A *COMMONPLACE* BOOK HERE IN MY SUITCASE.
AND DON'T WORRY. I'LL BE CAREFUL NOT TO DAMAGE IT.
IT WASN'T REALLY DAMAGE TO THE *BOOK* I WAS CONCERNED ABOUT, BUT YOU'LL DO AS YOU SEE FIT.
GOOD LUCK, MR. BLACK. I'LL BE HERE IN THE LIBRARY IF YOU NEED ME.
THANKS A MILLION, DR. WANTAGE, BUT I BET YOU DON'T HEAR ONE PEEP OUT OF ME.
THERE, NOW. I'M ALL SET...

orld has two masks, wearing them in turn so that where once
ere lands of dire esteem are now but dream, just as one day shal
ream be all of man's estate when cometh that Redeemer by
hose hand is all the Earth put right. He shall be born b
Lion's tail before twelve hundred winters pass, and thoug
"KITAB AL HIKMAH AL NAJMIYYA". IT MEANS "BOOK OF THE WISDOM OF THE STARS".
whereby the Redeemer shall know him, for black is the
messenger, and black is his path. A scribe is he, like to the
Thoth of antient Khem, and has strange instruments of glas
and metal. He is come out from a country distant and remote
time, where sparks fly everywhere about and silvered visions of
THE ORDER'S FOUNDER, FRENCHMAN *ETIENNE ROULET* ARRIVED IN GREENWICH, RHODE ISLAND, IN 1686, BRINGING KHALID'S BOOK WITH HIM.

THAT WOULD BE MR. HALI'S BOOK. I RECOLLECT I HAD OLD GARLAND WHEATLEY FROM OUT ATHOL WAY WRITE THAT IN FAIR FOR ME.
SEE, THIS SOCIETY I BELONGED TO GAVE SAINT ANSELM COLLEGE IN MANCHESTER A COPY OF THE BOOK AROUND 1890.
THAT WAS WHEN THEY WAS HAVIN' ALL THEIR BIG IDEAS.
A B G D H V Z CH T I K L M N S O P TZ Q R SH TH U Y

he outer dark, that are made vanquishers of death and
eritors of all eternity. Their wise traditions tell of four mea
the capacity to much protract the lifespan of a man so th
ight be numbered with the old ones of his tribe. The first
e is food, for that which hunge for its own kind is not swi
ts decline. The second is of wa th or cold, for there is no tr
ith the old ones of his
hich hunge for its o

B-BUT THAT'S... I-I MEAN, TO ME IT'S LIKE IT WAS *YESTERDAY*...
HA. WELL, THEY SAY TIME FLIES AS WE GET *OLDER*.
ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR NEW ENGLAND TRAVELS, MR. BLACK... AND I HOPE YOUR RESEARCHES COME TO A SATISFYING *CLOSE*.

...BOOK I'VE EVER READ. I FELT ALMOST LIKE I KNEW IT FROM BEFORE IN SOME WAY.
THANKS FOR EVERYTHING, DR. WANTAGE. IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE MEETING YOU.
WHY, THANK YOU.
I'VE LOOKED FORWARD TO YOUR VISIT SINCE FATHER RACE TOLD ME TO EXPECT YOU, TWO OR THREE WEEKS BACK IN AUGUST.
B-BUT THAT'S... I-I MEAN, TO ME IT'S LIKE IT WAS *YESTERDAY*...
HA. WELL, THEY SAY TIME FLIES AS WE GET *OLDER*.
ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR NEW ENGLAND TRAVELS, MR. BLACK... AND I HOPE YOUR RESEARCHES COME TO A SATISFYING *CLOSE*.
ELSPETH. BOY, AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU. I DON'T KNOW IF DR. WANTAGE IS CRAZY OR *I* AM.
H-HE THINKS I ARRIVED IN MANCHESTER THREE *WEEKS* AGO...
WELL, ASK ME, THAT'S JUST THE HONEST TRUTH. YOU *SAID* YOU'D BEEN STAYING AT GOFF'S FALLS UNTIL LAST NIGHT.
WHY? IS THERE SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?

OH, MY GOSH. THERE... THERE MUST BE SOMETHING *WRONG* WITH ME.
I-I'M SORRY, ELSPETH. I DON'T MEAN TO *SCARE* YOU, I JUST... I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT *DAY* IT IS...
WELL, IT'S WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER TENTH.
LOOK, IF YOU'RE UPSET YOU CAN RECOVER AT MY *LODGINGS*, ONLY WE'D BEST GET THERE BEFORE IT *RAINS.*
Y-YES, I GUESS THESE CLOUDS LOOK KIND OF THREATENING AND...
MY *RAINCOAT!* I JUST REMEMBERED, I LEFT IT BEHIND AT MRS. *MACEY'S.* WHAT AM I GOING TO DO IF...
OH, DON'T START FRETTING. YOU CAN GET A NEW ONE.
THERE'S A STORE THAT SELLS THEM RIGHT NEAR MY ROOM ON ORANGE STREET...
HERE WE ARE. IT ISN'T MUCH, BUT IT'S SOMEWHERE TO SHELTER UNTIL YOU FEEL BETTER.
USUALLY MY GUARDIAN MR. *FINNEY* STAYS HERE WITH ME, BUT I TOLD HIM HE SHOULD MAKE HIMSELF SCARCE...
ELSPETH, TH-THIS IS SO KIND. THERE'S PLENTY *ADULTS* WOULDN'T DO THIS.
I-I PROMISE I WON'T POUR OUT ALL MY PROBLEMS.

...A-AND SO AFTER MY FRIEND DIED I WANTED TO LEAVE NEW YORK, AND RESEARCHING THIS BOOK SEEMED THE BEST WAY.
NOW, THOUGH... I-IT'S LIKE I'M HAVING A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN. MAYBE I SHOULD QUIT.
I MEAN, LOSING THREE WEEKS. HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
YOU'RE JUST CONFUSED, BUT YOU WON'T QUIT. THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENS.
NO. NO, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. MY JOB AT THE HERALD'S GONE, MY ROOM'S GONE...
I-I SHOULD CARRY ON TO BOSTON, FIND THIS PHOTOGRAPHER, PITMAN.
YOU KNOW, IT'S FUNNY. I'M HERE INVESTIGATING THIS STELLA SAPIENTE ORDER, AND DR. WADE SAID YOUR LATE FATHER WAS INVOLVED...
MM. WELL, MANCHESTER'S JUST A LITTLE TOWN.
I-IT SURE IS. EVERYBODY KNOWS EVERYBODY.
BUT FOR SAYING IT'S SMALL, IT SEEMS TO BE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS STORY I'M TRACKING DOWN.
I-I KEEP THINKING ABOUT MEETING YOU ON THE BRIDGE. I'M SURE THAT WAS YESTERDAY...
WELL, YOU KNOW PROFESSOR EINSTEIN SAYS WE CAN'T BE SURE ABOUT TIME ANYMORE.
IS THAT WHAT HE SAYS? I'VE GOT TO ADMIT I NEVER REALLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT.
Y'KNOW, MAYBE I'M NOT THE GREAT INTELLECTUAL WRITER I THOUGHT I WAS.
MM-HM.
I MEAN, LOOK AT ME, NEEDING ADVICE FROM A THIRTEEN YEAR-OLD GIRL. YOU'RE SO MUCH SMARTER THAN I AM...

AND IT'S NOT JUST EINSTEIN. EVER SINCE I CAME TO NEW ENGLAND I'VE BEEN OUT OF MY DEPTH WITH...
U-UH...
E-ELSPETH, WH... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
YOU CAN SEE WHAT SHE'S DOING. SHE'S TAKING HER CLOTHES OFF SO THAT YOU CAN HAVE INTERCOURSE WITH HER.
WHAT? Y-YOU...
NO. NO, ELSPETH, I, I, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS IS, BUT I DIDN'T COME HERE TO...
NO. NO, I HAVE TO GO NOW. TH-THIS ISN'T RIGHT...
OH, BUT CERTAINLY IT IS. THIS WILL BE A IMPORTANT LESSON FOR YOU.
NO! GOD, WHAT IS IT WITH THIS PLACE? I-IS EVERYBODY CRAZY FOR SEX OR SOMETHING? I-IT'S...
I-I'VE GOT TO GO. I'VE GOT TO GET OUT NOW...
OH, NO. IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT. IT ISN'T EVEN WHAT YOU TRULY WANT.
I THINK THAT IF YOU CONSIDER THINGS, YOU WILL FIND THAT YOU...
...HAVE CHANGED YOUR MIND.

YOU SEE, WE'VE ALL BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME FOR YOU, AND WE ALL WISH TO MAKE AN *IMPRESSION.*
I MYSELF HAVE LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS *ESPECIALLY.* IT HAS BEEN MANY YEARS SINCE I ENJOYED SUCH AN ACT.
EDGAR'S WAS THE BEST VESSEL IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THOUGH UNFORTUNATELY HE HAD BECOME IMPOTENT.
W-WH...?
THIS ONE, IT WOULD SEEM, HAS NO SUCH DIFFICULTIES. YOURS IS YOUNGER AND, I THINK, A LITTLE BIGGER.
YES, I KNOW. I KNOW. IT IS A STRANGE EXPERIENCE AT FIRST, IS IT NOT?
ONE COMES AT LAST TO QUESTION EVEN THE *EXISTENCE* OF IDENTITY AS A PHENOMENON...
NO. YOU... THIS ISN'T MY VOICE!
THIS ISN'T *ME! NONE* OF THIS IS ME! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? WHAT'S...
IT'S A NIGHTMARE. THIS IS ALL A NIGHTMARE...
I AM SORRY THAT YOU FEEL THIS WAY.
PHILOSOPHERS MIGHT ENVY SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE OUTSIDE THEMSELVES. PLEASE, LIE ON THE *DIVAN*...
NO! I WON'T! OH GOD, WHAT ARE YOU... *AAA!*
I WOULD PREFER YOU DID NOT MAKE ME *HURT* HER, WHEN IT IS I WHO SHALL LIVE WITH HER BRUISES.
AHH. AH, I'D FORGOTTEN WHAT A FINE THING AN ERECTED PHALLUS IS.
OPEN ELSPETH'S LEGS. I AM GOING TO PUT IT INTO HER.

OUHHH! OH GODDDDD...
THERE. OH, THAT IS GOOD. THAT IS VERY GOOD. MM.
DON'T... UMMH... DON'T BE CONCERNED FOR ELSPETH. SHE... UMMH... SHE DIED IN HER FATHER'S... UMMH... HER FATHER'S BODY.
EVEN HE WAS... UMMH... WAS NOT THE FIRST.
AAA!
AAA!
AAA! OH, PLEASE. PLEASE DON'T...
THE FIRST WAS... UMMH... WAS MY POOR MATHILDE. SINCE... UMMH... SINCE THEN THERE HAVE BEEN... UMMH... BEEN DOZENS.
NE T'EN FAIS PAS! JE... HUN... JE VAIS BIEN SÛR ME RETIRER AVANT DE... AHHH... LA METTRE ENCEINTE.
Ô COMBIEN DE... HUN... COMBIEN DE SIÉCLES AIS-JE ATTENDU POUR... AHHH... POUR ÉTALER LA SAGESSE DES ÉTOILES SUR... AHH... TON VENTRE REBONDI!
NNNAAAA....
OH, NO. OH NO...
...UMMH...
...UMMH...
...UMMH...

THERE. I THINK THAT WE ARE DONE.
ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR YOU TO GO FORTH INTO THE WORLD AND ACT YOUR PART TO ITS *CONCLUSION.*
AND REMEMBER, PLEASE, TO CLOSE THE DOOR...
...ON YOUR WAY OUT.
BY THE WAY, I FOUND YOU MOST *ENJOYABLE.* YOU HAVE AN ENERGETIC *FRAME.*
OF COURSE, YOU'VE MADE HER SORE, BUT THAT IS A SMALL MATTER...
WHAT... WHAT HAVE YOU... YOU CAN'T...
D-DID YOU... DID YOU *HYPNOTISE* ME? I... I CAN TELL SOMEBODY. I...

WHY, LAND SAKES, MR. BLACK, I GUESS YOU CAN AT THAT.
EXCEPT I DO BELIEVE THAT'S YOUR SPERM DRYING ON MY COVERLET...
...WHICH MAKES ME WONDER WHAT IT IS YOU'RE GOING TO TELL THEM.
O-OH GOD. YOU... OH MY GOD...
WELL, THEY DO SAY THAT FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM.
NOW, YOU HAVE IMPORTANT MATTERS TO ATTEND TO.
IT IS BEST YOU BE ON YOUR WAY BEFORE I HAVE ELSPETH DECIDE SHE WANTS SOME MORE, N'EST CE PAS?

AHUHHH
AHUHHH
AHUHHH
You Are Leaving
MANCHESTER

You Are Leaving MANCHESTER
You Are Leaving MANCHESTER
You Are Leaving MANCHESTER
You Are Leaving MANCHESTER
Providence

August 19th

I wish I had somebody I could tell about all this — I'm just so darn excited after all these weeks to be here in St. Anselm, sitting at a table in their library with a copy of the thing that I've been looking for since Dr. Alvarez first mentioned it right here in front of me: "Hali's Booke of the Wisdom of the Stars", the 1651 edition, pretty much as Suydam has described it in his pamphlet. I've not looked at it yet, and I must admit to being kind of nervous about doing so. It's just that having heard so much about it, and what with the inspiration that it's provided for Guillot's Sous le Monde and Chambers' King in Yellow (both forbidden books reputed to drive people crazy), I'm finding the atmosphere and the aura that it has around it more than a little intimidating. I know that this is all a product of my own overheated imagination, but all the same I think I'll fill in what's happened since my last entry before I take the plunge and actually get up the nerve to look at it properly.

I guess one of the reasons I'm a little jumpy — and again, this is entirely my own fault — is how unsettling I'm finding my stay here in Manchester. There just seems to be something I can't put my finger on about the place, but which nonetheless leaves me ill at ease as evidenced by my ridiculous behaviour at Goffs Falls last night. God, waking up today in Hector North's formaldehyde-perfumed spare room, once I'd remembered where I was and how I'd got there I spent some few minutes groaning to myself in sheer embarrassment at what I'd done. I mean, what in the heck is wrong with me? I make an idiot of myself in Flatbush by descending into Robert Suydam's cellar when he's told me not to and then the next thing you know I'm fleeing my accommodation in the middle of the night and turning up at a near-stranger's house for sanctuary on account of nothing more than one of my persistent crazy dreams. I guess this is all just that I'm still shaky and unbalanced after all the stuff with Lily, although I don't think it's just that. Even with what I've just said about my likely mental state, I still think Manchester would be unnerving for the most well-balanced visitor, what with that meteor-collision site and everything. To be honest, even the act of waking up at Dr. North's place wasn't wholly without a mysterious incident or two.

I was up pretty early after some fuzzy and muddled dreams that I can barely remember — something about reading a book, which in the dream seemed to be a finished and published copy of my new novel, or at least I think it was something to do with the same. Dr. North's companion and housemate Mr. Montague turned out to be an excellent cook and served up some of the best corned

beef hash that I can remember since Aunt Rebecca in Milwaukee! Even so, breakfast was somewhat colored by the atmosphere between my two hosts, which involved a lot of under-the-surface bickering. While Montague was off in the kitchen, North made a quiet invitation for me to call back at the Orange Street house later in the day and spend some time with him. I was actually thinking it over—such has been the sparseness of my recent human contact—when Montague was called away by a knock at the door, only to return a moment or so later with his face literally as white as a sheet. He made it clear that he had to speak to Dr. North alone—something about a St. Anselm student who'd delivered some unwelcome news—and when they both returned to the room the atmosphere between them and the exchange of veiled comments, if anything, made what had come before seem positively sunny. They both seemed to be badly unnerved, and I got a sense of some business related to their past together that had come back to haunt them. They made it pretty plain that they needed to get out of Manchester fast, possibly relocating to Boston unless I misheard that bit, and also made it clear that I should take this as a cue to finish my breakfast and be on my way.

No sooner had I been hurried out the door, than who should I run into but little Elspeth, the unusually bright little girl who directed me to Goffs Falls yesterday. It turns out it was her who'd delivered the message from the college that had upset Messrs. North and James so much. I guess with her living on Orange Street as well it made sense that she should deliver the message, but when I asked her what the message had been, she only said that it had been from a Canadian military man, possibly someone North and James had met during their military service, and that this fellow was seeking some sort of reunion with the doctor and his colleague. Beyond that, she had no idea what might have upset the pair so much about receiving such an innocuous-sounding missive. I'm sure that as an innocent thirteen year-old, such grown-up matters would be completely beyond her grasp.

Anyway, since she was headed up to the college and, lacking anywhere better to go, I was thinking about heading that way myself, she accompanied me right the way up the hill to St. Anselm. On the way there, I noticed that the trees really are changing color early here in New Hampshire, just like I thought they were when I was being driven into town yesterday. That's something of a relief, actually, since along with a lot of my other recent odd behaviour I was starting to think that there might be something wrong with me that went beyond still being upset about Lily. When we arrived at the college I said so long to Elspeth, and then went to see if I could find somebody to just generally show me

around the college, since as far as I knew the Head of the college library, a Dr. Wantage, was away for some little time. Then, when I found Dr. Race who I met yesterday and asked if he could oblige me with a tour of the premises, he completely confounded me by casually stating that Dr. Wantage had been back for over a week. And yet I'm sure that yesterday I heard him say that Wantage was away and wouldn't be back until later in August. I guess that either it's a really mean and petty Catholic practical joke played on a non-believer, or else I just got what I was told hopelessly jumbled up and then leaped to a bunch of erroneous conclusions. I'd really prefer to believe the first of these, but I fear that it's probably the latter in which the truth of the matter resides. Maybe my accurate observations about Fall settling in early around here and my jumping on this as proof of my continuing sanity could be seen as a little premature.

Or then again, maybe there is some sort of resident craziness right here in the college. Dr. Race himself is an eccentric enough individual, but when we went off to find the apparently-returned Dr. Wantage, I was introduced to another of Race's colleagues, one Dr. Nat Paisley, who makes Race seem the very model of sense and sobriety. Dr. Paisley — or so I was told by the agreeable-if-gruff Dr. Wantage ~~when~~ as he led me to the library — was the college's Head of Political Economy, but had suffered some kind of calamitous mental breakdown in 1908. For the next five years, according to Wantage, Paisley was a completely different person in every particular, and by the time of his equally sudden recovery in 1913 his personal life was in ruins and his wife and children had left him. Paisley had a demeanour that bordered on tragedy: an evidently brilliant man whose life had been all but destroyed by a psychological episode over which he'd had no control, and who seems to be perpetually nervous and flinching and afraid of something, as if some terrible shadow had fallen over his mind and personality. It's a dreadful thing to see, and I really hope that I never end up like that.

Henry Wantage, like I say, seemed to be a likeable and tremendously helpful man, despite his slightly stern (or even grim) manner, and he led me without fuss to the college library. The first thing he pointed out to me was a framed photograph of college benefactors the Stella Sapiente themselves. It was quite a shock, having heard so much about these mysterious individuals, to discover that they looked like a group of relatively ordinary people, as opposed to whatever nonsense I might have been imagining. It was certainly a funny feeling to see Garland and Leticia Wheatley as part of the group, bearing in mind that the picture had apparently been taken around 1890 or so, the year that Garland's wife and Leticia's mother had died in that accident or whatever it was, when Leticia must

have been around twelve years old. Also included in the group, along with a number of people I didn't recognise, was a very striking individual who Dr. Wantage informed me was the late Edgar Wade and who it transpires was the father of my little local tour guide, Elspeth. The Wades are a Salem family of good repute, apparently, and a little girl that I ran into by accident turns out to be the daughter of one of the order's leaders. If that doesn't beat all! It strikes me that if I hadn't been so patronizing in my assumptions about Elspeth's level of maturity I could have just got most of my answers from her and saved myself a whole lot of trouble. Another odd little coincidence I noticed was that the photographer behind this group study was the same Ronald Pitman of Boston who had taken that peculiar photograph of Willard Wheatley that I saw in Athol, sitting alone on a sofa and mislabelled 'the boys'. I suppose it's logical enough, in that Garland Wheatley probably met this Pitman fellow at the earlier group sitting and then still had his address and details when he wanted a Wheatley family photograph. It occurs to me that when I'm done in Manchester, whenever that is, I might pay a visit to Boston and look Pitman up. He sounds like he might at least have been close enough to the order to provide me with some additional information, as well as possibly being an interesting character in his own right. Besides, I've never been to Boston, which I've heard is a beautiful and picturesque place, and while I'm in this neck of the woods I figure I might as well take the opportunity.

Well, Dr. Wantage next led me over to the locked cabinet in which they keep their 17th century edition of Hali's Book, making a number of mock-sinister warnings as he did so about the book's supposedly grim reputation in a display of dry Catholic humor, or at least that's what I assume. Having retrieved the "dreaded tome" from the cabinet, Wantage next established me at the library table where I'm scrawling this, gave me permission to copy whatever I wanted and then left me to my own devices, which suits me down to the ground. I have to admit that I've barely opened it yet — it's still resting on the table where Wantage left it — and that part of the reason I'm writing all these preliminary notes is so I can put off looking at it for a while, which is ridiculous. That's just me responding to all of the stories that I've heard about the book, along with Dr. Wantage's attempts at dusty librarian jocularity. What I'm going to do is to act like a grown man and simply look at the thing objectively for what it is, which is just a very old and funny-smelling book that some people have constructed a whole mythology around.

Looked at like that, I'd have to say that the thing is something of a disap-

pointment. I don't know what I'd thought a book of alchemy would look like — maybe something with stars and moons and cryptic planetary symbols on the cover — but this looks so plain and ordinary it could just as easily be a ledger of building regulations or a cookery book. It doesn't even look particularly old or eccentric or English, the way I was expecting. The covers are just worn gray boards, and there aren't even any of those words with an S that looks like an F. I suppose I was hoping it would be more Shakespearian or something, whatever I mean by that. It's even got an advertisement for printers' ink on the cover, which isn't what I'd been expecting from a compendium of dark magical lore. I can't help but feel that I'm being really silly and shallow here. I mean, obviously, this is a book that was published as part of an ordinary commercial venture in a place and time that didn't seem at all exotic or mysterious to the people who were living there and then; who were working the printing presses or laboring over the binding. This was probably no more noteworthy to the people who produced it than an edition of The Herald would be to someone like me, or Prissy Turner, or Freddy Dix. And in both cases, the publishers would be just as likely to insist we stick an ad for printers' ink on the cover.

All right, so now I've actually opened in and carefully read through a couple of pages, and I must say that it's really a lot more interesting than it looks from the outside. There's an introduction by, presumably, Khālid Ibn Yazīd himself that I really should try to copy down, and ~~that~~ then beneath that there's a complementary text in a smaller typeface which I assume is the commentary by the later Arab occult scholar who expanded the Kitab al Hikmah al Najmiyya from Khālid's original version, Ahmad Ibn 'Ali Ibn Yusuf Al-Buni. There's actually a strange atmosphere or aura of authority which I guess comes from this old black-letter typography and which my copied notes won't be able to convey, but here goes anyway:

"Hark unto my words, for I am Khālid, who is son unto a Caliph, and alone among men have I seen what is below the Earth, and that which is beyond its corners and its edges, and also have had conversation with the Sultans who in that unbounded country do abide. I am come here to tell you that the very soil beneath our feet was once no more than fleeting dream, and that it shall be so again, for only in the world that is below things does the real reside, and we and all our acts are but its shadow.

"Once I was as thee, a prisoner to Time and to man's pauper senses of awareness, that I was one blind and dumb who knows only a little world and thinks he knows the all of it. I was as thee! I passed my days in toil and studies

that I said to others were both worthy and important things to have accomplished in the world, and yet at last could not myself measure their worth or say why they should have importance. So too did I pass my nights in dreams of senseless tasks, and journeys, and appointments, that would seem as urgent as those in my waking life, for all that they should prove foolish and vain upon awakening. I was as thee! My days and nights alike were spent in senseless labors, and there was no final meaning to be found in either, nor yet any token of the absolute.

"Then, when I had grown old and thought that all my writings and my scholarship were done with, there came unto me a dream more real than any other of its kind — nay, more real than my shadow of a life itself — so that I was filled past my brim with an outrageous knowledge that my notions of the world could not contain. In slumber, it was as though I were walking on the shore of an outlandish lake that was all made of stormy clouds and vapours that had something of the luminous ~~above~~ about them. Marvelling, mine eyes were cast up to the heavens, where I saw that there was not one sun alone but that it had a brother, of diminished and more sickly countenance. Then it was as though I heard a voice that said "Now is before', and by this understood that what I saw was yet to come.

"Thereafter was it shewn to me the stars of the night sky that make the sign we call the Bull, so that I was made sure of the far place from where my dream had flown to me, and next was I transported to another place entire where were there built great things of leaning stone, more wonderful that mosques or palaces and raised up by a different art, so that the measuring of them could not be done with all man's rods and instruments. Here were there men made in a foreign way, so that they did not seem like men at all, but more like unto things that grow on stones beneath the ocean, although monstrous big and with a great air of intelligence and purpose, and their heads were stars. By means of subtle gesturing and some pathetic bond that was between us, I became instructed in the manufacture of a certain mirror, little bigger than a man's palm and to be constructed from the black glass that volcanoes make from sand. This was to be my means of conversation with the men whose heads were stars from that night on, as though it were a speaking tube or else a telescope whereby I might both see and hear my distant friends, with their remarkable instructions.

"And when I did wake, I did what I was told to do, and summoned artisans to fashion for me such a mirror as was in my vision, and when this was done I took the glass away in solitude and gazed upon it until once more I beheld the

lake of rolling fog and light, and saw the ill-matched suns that were above it, and before long had the company of my new-found acquaintances. On this occasion, to my waking eye they did display some four-and-twenty letters of a new kind, writ in a blue fire, that I was made to write down and next was I tutored patiently by my new teachers as to their strange language and vocabulary. In this new tongue, for twice a hundred days and nights, I learned of the star-headed men's philosophy, and of their wondrous healing methods, and alike of their great skill with calculation. Truly, all the wisdom of the stars is mine, and here I speak it plainly to those who have ears to listen."

Boy, that's quite a mouthfull. The whole thing sounds a lot more like H.G. Wells than the more-biblical Arabian Nights romance that I was anticipating... that business about the twin suns, and making the black mirror that seems to function like some sort of telephonic apparatus is one of the oddest things I've ever read. Anyway, beneath all that there's a shorter section set in smaller type, which I might as well include just to give a flavour of how the book is set out.

"OF THIS AL BUNI HAS WRITTEN:

Here does Khālid tell us of the world of Djinn, that is here on the Earth beside our own yet which has been concealed from mortal sight through God's great wisdom. It has been conjectured that the seven planets or the fixed stars of the zodiac may likewise have their hidden counterparts where dwell the Djinn of other Earths than ours. If this were so, then it might readily explain the matter of the language that is taught to Khālid, being customary to this foreign kind of Djinn, whereas the Djinn of our own plane are not thought to possess a language that is separated from that which we speak."

I got so caught up in copying down all the stuff above that I lost track of where I was or just how long I've been here. It occurs to me that if I don't make a real effort to be more selective about what I copy down, I could be here for days. I'm going to flip through the material more quickly and just note down things that catch my eye or seem important for some reason, like the piece below that seems to be about this figure 'the redeemer' that I've heard so much concerning:

"And so it was that all the world was made wrong, when what had been was buried and forgotten. Yet in places where man does not tread, in tunnels underneath the ground or islands undiscovered and unvisited where there is no man's eye to see or yet man's tongue to say it is not so, the world that was may

manifest. Those travellers there are who speak of demons that abide beneath our very tombs, that have the head and countenance of dogs with ghastly smiles, or tell of savage fish-men and their beauteous fish-women who have their jewelled towns beneath our southern seas, and think ye not, O man, that these effects be idle fancy, for the world has two masks, wearing them in turn so that where once were lands of dire esteem are now but dream, just as one day shall dream be all of man's estate when cometh that Redeemer by whose hand is all the Earth put right. He shall be born below the Lion's tail before twelve hundred winters pass, and though the sage knows himself not, these are the ways that ye shall know him, for in his own day even he shall not be recognised.

"The signs where is he known are these, for it is said of the Redeemer that he shall be born where there are seven hills and shall be hidden from the sight of man as one accursed. His Mother shall be white as chalcedony and his Father gone away where shall his Grand-sire, be he driven from his proper wits, make for to school him in those matters of the hidden world pertaining to the miracles observed by country people. For is it not spoken that there may be ghouls and other impure spirits, at those places that are of a great remoteness where a man may only seldom look upon them? Thus shall the Redeemer grow to his estate, though he be senseless to his destiny, and even when a Messenger is come to him with the Glad Tidings that are his for to bestow upon the world, and make it right, yea, even then shall the Redeemer know not that by this means is the joyous prophecy fulfilled."

Then, under that, there's another interjection from Al Buni—

"OF THIS AL BUNI HAS WRITTEN:

Here is Khālid thought to speak of Rome, founded on seven hills, and to make prophecy of one who will be born there on a future day so distant that it can scarce be imagined. It may be that Khālid speaks of a great ruler of the Roman faith, who is yet born unto a family that have been weakened by close breeding so that they have taken on the pallor and the madness of which Khālid tells. The messenger or herald that is come to this Redeemer to make plain his destiny may be thought of a kind with Hermes of the Greeks, though he be of a different nature and appearance."

Actually, reading the above had made me think about some of the things I heard and saw when I was visiting the Wheatleys outside Athol. Didn't Garland Wheatley imply that he'd wanted him and his family to be the ones who produced this Redeemer figure? And I think I recall the appallingly ugly Willard saying that in the Redeemer story there was supposed to be a crazy grandfather, a white-faced woman and an ugly boy-child... which is a very close de-

scription of Garland, Leticia and Willard Wheatley themselves, now I come to think of it. I know that Athol sits amongst a lot of brooding "round-topped hills" as the librarian I met there put it, but unfortunately I never thought to count them. I suppose there could be seven of them, which would have loaned Garland's crazed ideas about fulfilling this equally crazy ancient prophecy some kind of basis. As unlikely as it seems, there's much within this seemingly-deranged old book that's helping me to understand some of the things that have been happening to me, which is just what I'd wanted from it. I guess I should go on with flipping through it and try to get down as much as possible. I've just come across some material that seems to relate, not to the Redeemer, but to this Messenger character who apparently delivers the "Glad Tidings" to him so that he can fulfil his destiny:

"Now, when is he made all alone so that he knows not where to seek relief, then shall there come to him a Messenger who shall make unto him a great annunciation. Many are the signs whereby the Redeemer shall know him, for black is the messenger, and black is his path. A scribe is he, like to the Thoth of ancient Khem, and has strange instruments of glass and metal. He is come out of a country distant and remote in time, where sparks fly everywhere about, and silvered visions of charred ruin may be conjured readily, for he is emissary to a Pharaoh great and old that is called N____-hotep, counted among those that were, and are yet, and further shall be, when the days are reckoned as the thumb-lengths of a fixed mass. For is it not said that the Eternal knows not cease nor change, and death dies if the aeons be measured strange?"

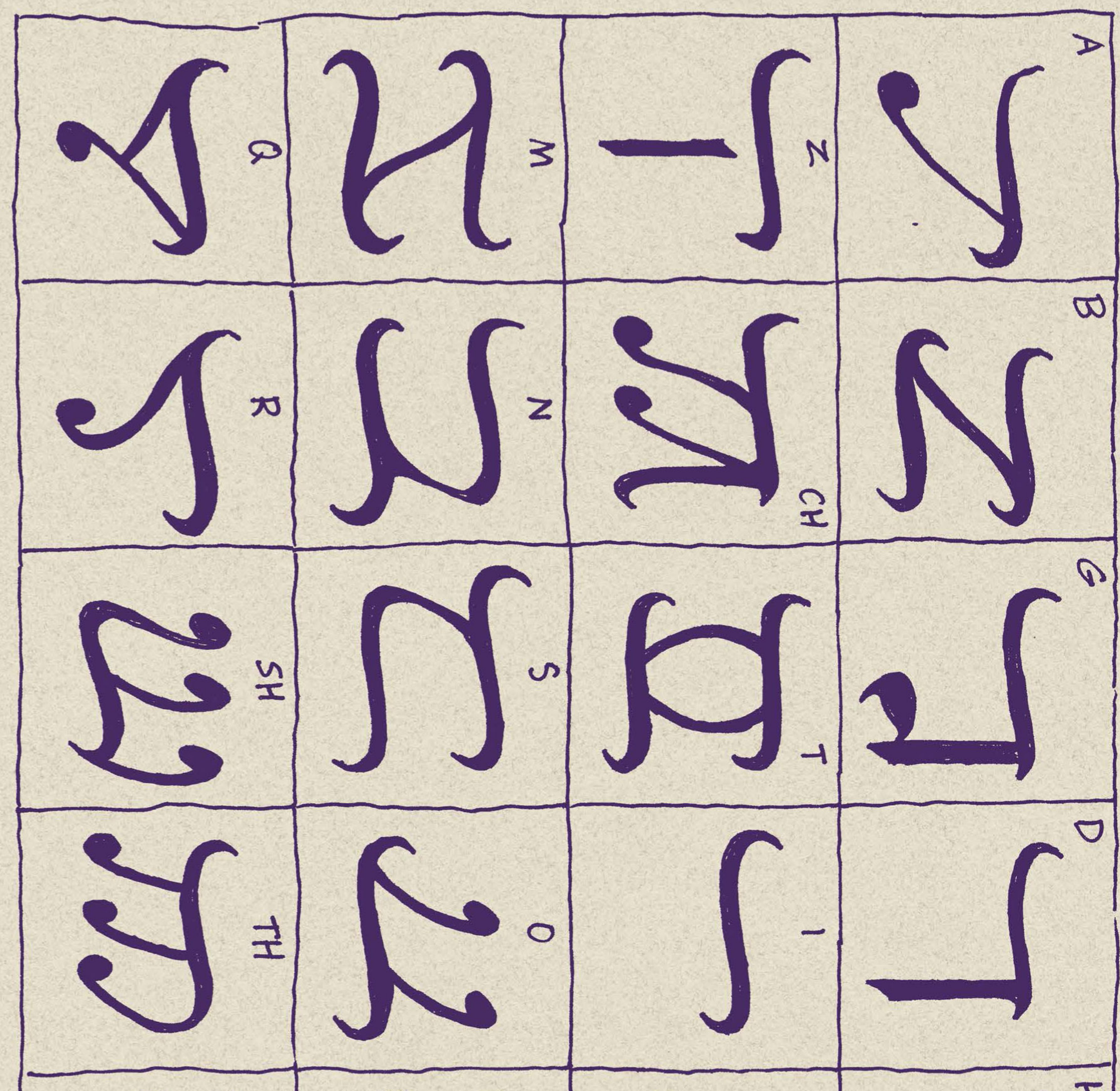
Then there's another annotation by Al Buni—

"OF THIS AL BUNI HAS WRITTEN:

Here Khālid Ibn Yazīd speaks of one born to the kingdoms before Khem was young, that knew of amber and had many sorceries. Though some have thought the King that is not named to be the famed Nebuchadnezzar, it will be to all men plain this is instead the title of a mighty Djinn, who may grant an intelligence that reckons differently the passing of the hours, and teaches of unnumbered other things beside. One of these is a philosophy to penetrate the thoughts of man, and also there is a great novelty of calculation, and a type of speech that is uncommon, which brings with it untoward and foreign sensibilities."

Right near that there's the darnedest thing, that I simply must make an attempt to copy down. It's a sort of a grid affair that has what I presume is the otherworldly language mentioned earlier, or at least its alphabet, arranged in the various squares with their English equivalents lettered in. I'm going to see if I can copy it out here without making an absolute mess of it.

"HEREUNDER IS A TABLE OF THE AQLO LETTERS, THAT THEY MAY BE UNDERSTOOD BY MEN."



I've made a whole bunch of mistakes, I'm sure, but I just really felt compelled to copy out the cipher-alphabet because it looked as if it was important. To be honest, just in copying it I was beginning to feel really strange for a few moments there. The hours have just been flying by while I've been sitting here and copying all of this other-worldly stuff, completely lost in a world of my own — or a world of somebody's, at any rate. There have been students coming in and out to study or refer to books, and I've been so oblivious to them they might as well have not been there at all, or might as well have all been the most transient and vaporous of ghosts. It's like I've lost all track of time. I've probably been sitting here too long, but I think I should just press on with making my transcriptions. After all, I don't know if I'll ever get another chance to see this thing and it seems that its central to my book. There's a piece a little further on from this alphabet-table that seems to be a partial explanation of the language with a brief glossary of words appended to it. There's far too many to transcribe them all, but copying down a few should give an idea of the flavour.

"The table of the letters was revealed in a manner that the power of their impact on my senses should be muted and so bearable, with many cloaking reversals in their orientation and their ordering. The letters were shewn each in turn as mirrored in a black glass, where were angels that have heads like unto stars. By this device were many words imparted with their meanings, being of a nature that unties the world.

"NGATHV, which is said FHTAGN, expresses the act of THAT WHICH DREAMS ITSELF, or else THAT WHICH IS ITS OWN DREAM OF ITSELF.

"OLQA, which is said AQLO, is THE GOSSAMER OF SPEAKING WHICH CONCEALS THE THING ITSELF.

"IA'Y-AZV, which is said WZA Y'EI, is THE VAST UNSPOKEN NEGATION THAT WORDS BRING, AS THOUGH AN ABSENT SHADOW.

"ANH-OHD, which is said DHO-HNA, is THAT INTRUSIVE FORCE WHOSE ENTRY INFLICTS A NEW SIGNIFICANCE.

"RGNHHN RY, which is said YR NHHNGR, is THE NOW THAT IS BEFORE, or else THE FUTURE THAT CONTAINS THE NOW THAT CONTAINS THE BEFORE.

"CHANOLOG'Y, which is said Y'GOLONAC, is THE INVIOLABLE RULE THAT RULES FOR ITS OWN VIOLATION.

"IULGN'HP, which is said PH'NGLUI, is AN IMMERSION OF THAT WHICH IS ITSELF MORE FORCEFULLY IMMERSIVE, or else THE OCEAN HIDDEN IN THE PUDDLE."

There. I think that's quite enough of that. Copying out those words gave me more of a creepy feeling that even copying the alphabet did. It's just sinking in that these are the actual words and thoughts of Khālid Ibn Yazīd himself, a real man who lived and died more than a thousand years ago. It's a little like being inside his mind, and that doesn't feel like a very reassuring place to be. There are dozens of pages of the book, that are entirely printed (somehow) in the invented alphabet, and even though there appear to be English translations at the end of the section, I can't really bear to even read through any more of this unpronounceable madness. I'm going to have to stop doing this soon and get out into the fresh air. There are just a couple more pieces I need to copy down—

"In our arts of medicine and healing are we as but children to these great men of the outer dark, that are made vanquishers of death and so inheritors of all eternity. Their wise traditions tell of four means with the capacity to much protract the lifespan of a man so that he might be numbered with the old ones of his tribe. The first of these is food, for that which hungers for its own kind is not swift in its decline. The second is of warmth or cold, for there is no true death save in material decay. The third such method lies in the revival of the flesh with philtres and decanted fluids, or else with the subtly acquired preserved essential salts of man. The fourth means is most terrible, and rests on the eviction of a soul so that a new inhabitant might occupy the emptied vessel, with its former occupant alike interred within the sorcerer's unwanted former residence."

That must be the 'four methods' that I've been hearing so much about since Dr. Alvarez first mentioned them to me a month or two ago. That first one— I don't know. That sort of sounds like cannibalism or something very like it. I'm going to be really glad when I've finished copying down these last few pieces. I keep drifting off into frankly unpleasant reveries, and it's like I don't even know where I am. Why do I feel so anxious, as if something really bad is just about happen, or, even worse, is already happening? Anyway, don't think about it. Just

get these last few notes written down and then I can get out of here. There's a piece towards the end that looks like it's about getting rid of these horrible things from another world if you've decided you don't want them around anymore—

"And when their great, unending day is come again upon the world, then shall all reckoning of days be slain, and so shall every hour be reckoned as a man's pace in that desert which is time, a mighty wasteland that is hidden that its victims know it not, nor feel its blasting winds that render them to bone and dust. The histories of man shall be collapsed to naught save dreams, and all about the new world shall parade those agencies that were before the first times. The one that is like to a door all made of orbs shall be first manifest, that those of whom he is a part, like to an organ of the body or an actor in the drama that they represent, may follow after. There shall come the one whose self is a constellation and who is beyond all naming and all knowing, and the one with many faces who is their dread voice. There shall come she who is the fertile cloud which procreates without cease, and at last the one that shall dream a new past that can include his birth, his sovereignty, and his dreaming. None may stand against their rule, save that they know the certain signs which lend restraint. The presences born from the ocean may be contained by a symbol like unto a cross with hooks, that in its angles functions like a knot tied on a different altitude of being. In the same way can those presences pertaining to the aethers or the earthly element be bound by an arrangement that is like unto a star with five points, one of which is uppermost. This is a knot like to the hooked cross, but of greater intricacy and reliability, and also is a symbol standing for the great authority of the star-headed men. By these means may the ascendancy of Earth's old masters be averted, and yet know that all time is a dream of the great dreamer who is not yet born, and whether this shall be or not, it is already writ."

Oh God, that's enough. That's more than enough. I just noticed that there's nobody in the whole library except for me and one of the library attendants who look as if they're about to close the place up. I ought to go and find Dr. Wantage and thank him before I make a quick exit and desperately try to find some new accommodation here in Manchester before it gets too dark to look for anywhere. After spending all day lost in this unfathomable book I'm feeling a lot more jittery than I did even last night, and look at how ridiculously I behaved then. Maybe Wantage or one of his eccentric professor friends will be able to recommend somewhere. I'm sure as hell not going back to Goffs Falls, even if it was all just a stupid dream.

The light that falls in through the library windows is looking pretty bad for August. I guess it must be coming on to rain, and I've just now remembered that I left my raincoat back in Mrs. Macey's house. I don't care. I wish I could shake this feeling that everything's closing in on me, which must just be a result of sitting here and flipping through this weird and morbid book, all day. The way I feel, it almost makes me credit all those publicity stunt rumors around Guillot's Sous Le Monde and the use that Robert Chambers made of them in The King in Yellow. If ever there was genuinely a book that could unnerve somebody to the point of madness then I think I've just become acquainted with it. Here comes the librarian. I'd better get out of here before it's too late.

CHAPTER 7

"*Pickman's Model* describes the Boston North End as it was until a few years ago, though many of these old tangled alleys have now been swept away by civic change—the ancient houses demolished, and warehouses erected on their site."

—To Duane Rimel,
Feb 14th, 1934

THEY... THEY... THEY JUST...
THEY JUST SHOVED ME OFF THE BUS HERE. TH-THEY SHOVED ME OFF AND THEY DROVE ON...
I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM.
A-AM I IN AMERICA?
NO, LAD, YOU'RE NOT.
YOU'RE IN BOSTON.
BOSTON...?
I-I THOUGHT I WAS *IMAGINING* ALL THIS. M-MY MIND... IT'S BEEN PLAYING *TRICKS* ON ME...
OH, NOW, I DOUBT THAT YOU'VE MORE OF A SCREW LOOSE THAN GOVERNOR COOLIDGE.
WHAT IS IT THAT'S GOT YOU SO RATTLED, YOU DON'T MIND ME ASKIN'?
I...
I THINK I MIGHT HAVE GONE CRAZY.
I-I THINK I MIGHT HAVE RAPED A YOUNG GIRL.

HUH.
WELL, YOU WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST.
VII: THE PICTURE

ALTHOUGH THAT SAID, I'VE TACKLED A FEW RAPERS AND LUNATICS MESELF, AND YOU DON'T ACT THE TYPE.
YOU SEEM MORE SHELL-SHOCKED, LIKE THE FELLERS WERE ABROAD.
WHATEVER'S BROUGHT YOU TO BOSTON ON SUCH A GRAND OLD NIGHT?
I-I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE IN THE NORTH END. WH-WHAT'S GOING ON?
SURE, NOTHIN' A BLIND MAN COULDN'T SEE COMIN' A MILE AWAY.
US FLATTIES WANTED DECENT PAY, BUT WITH THE RED SCARE THEY REFUSED. SAID WE WERE BOLSHEVIKS. NOW WE'RE ON STRIKE.
YOU'LL NEVER REACH NORTH END ON YOUR OWN. I'D BEST WALK YOU THERE...
WILSON BROS
I... I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING...
I-I MEAN, WITH NO POLICE... I-IS THIS WHAT THE COUNTRY'S LIKE?
LOOK FOR YOURSELF. HARDLY A COUNTRY AT ALL, IS IT, WITH NOTHIN' HOLDIN' IT TOGETHER?
AND BOSTON'S THE VERY START OF AMERICA, MIND.
I'M THINKIN' THAT IT'S SEEN ONE REVOLUTION, AND IT'S SHY OF ANOTHER.
BUT... I-IT'S LIKE UNDERNEATH EVERYTHING, THERE'S JUST...
JUST THIS CHAOS...
AYE, IT'S A TOUCH MORE BOISTEROUS THAN LAST NIGHT, I'LL GRANT YOU THAT.
THOUGH IF IT'S CHAOS THAT YOU'RE WANTIN', THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE COME LAST JANUARY, WHEN WE HAD THE OLD MOLASSES TANK EXPLODE.

MOLASSES? I... I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
SHAWLS CLOAKS
AH, IT'S USED FOR MAKIN' THE INDUSTRIAL *ALCOHOL.*
IT MIGHT BE THAT THE PURITY DISTILLERS UP IN NORTH END WERE INCREASIN' THEIR *PRODUCTION* UNDER FEAR OF *PROHIBITION.*
ANYWAY, WE HAD A TWO-MILLION GALLON VAT OF IT BLOW UP. BY GOD, THAT WAS A SIGHT.
THE RIVETS ON THE TANK SHOT OUT LIKE BULLETS, AND THERE WAS A FIFTEEN-FOOT WAVE OF MOLASSES RUSHIN' DOWN COMMERCIAL STREET.
THREE FOOT DEEP IN IT THEY WERE. HORSES, MEN AND CHILDREN DROWNIN' IN IT, STRUGGLIN' LIKE SO MANY FLIES ON STICKY PAPER.
WE WORKED DOUBLE SHIFTS, PAID LESS THAN *STREETCAR CONDUCTORS.*
WE WERE STILL CLEARIN' UP IN MAY, WHEN WE HAD THE *LETTS* PROTESTS.
THEY WERE COMIN' AT US WITH ICE-PICKS. CAPTAIN HAD A HEART ATTACK AND DIED RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT.
YET RATHER THAN GIVE US A *RAISE*, GOVERNOR *COOLIDGE* AND MR. CURTIS THE COMMISSIONER WOULD SOONER WE HAD *THIS.*
I-I'M SORRY, I... I'M NOT REALLY TAKING ALL THIS *IN.* I'VE NOT HEARD OF ANY COOLIDGE...
OH, YOU WILL, THE WAY HE'S HANDLIN' THINGS. SURE, DIDN'T MR. *WILSON* MENTION HIM JUST RECENTLY?
YOU WAIT. HE'LL PUT THIS MURDERIN' AND MISERY TO THE GOOD OF HIS *CAREER.*
THE MAN'S A GHOUL, IF YOU WANT MY OPINION.

DENTIST
I-IS THIS HENCHMAN STREET? I-I WAS LOOKING FOR A PHOTOGRAPHER CALLED PITMAN, AT NUMBER 21.
I-I HAVEN'T EVEN ASKED YOUR NAME. I'M, I'M JUST SHAKEN UP, SEEING THE ARMY AND EVERYTHING. I'M ROBERT BLACK...
ÉAMON O'BRIEN.
AND THOSE BOYS IN THE GAITERS ARE MORE LIKELY SCARED O' YOU THAN THE OTHER WAY ABOUT.
WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I MEAN EARLIER, I SAW A MOB RUSHIN' 'EM. THIS YOUNG SAILOR SHOUTS "COME ON, THEY'RE JUST FIRIN' OVER OUR HEADS!"
THE LAD WHAT SHOT HIM WAS SO UPSET, HE STEPPED FORWARD TO STOP HIM FROM FALLIN'.
DID NO GOOD MIND. POOR FELLER WAS DEAD IN FIVE MINUTES.
THERE'S SOME MIGHT ENVY HIM. IT'S PLAIN THE STRIKE'S FINISHED, AND THERE'S LITTLE FEAR O' GETTIN' JOBS BACK AFTER THIS.
AS FOR ME, OR FEDERATED LABOUR IN THE POLICE, I CAN'T SEE EITHER OF US HAS GOT MUCH OF A FUTURE.
WELL, HERE'S NUMBER 21. SHALL I KNOCK?
UH... S-SURE. GO AHEAD...

UHM...
YES?
A MR. PITMAN, IS IT? THIS YOUNG FELLER'S BEEN AFTER FINDIN' YOU. TO BE TRUTHFUL, HE'S IN A BAD WAY.
I-I SAW YOUR WORK AT MR. WHEATLEY'S FARM, AND AT SAINT ANSELM. I-I JUST THOUGHT...
UHM. YOU'VE MET THE WHEATLEYS, THEN?
I, UHM, I SUPPOSE YOU'D BETTER COME IN.
NONE O' MY BUSINESS, BUT YOUR MAN THERE LOOKS ABOUT READY TO DROP...
HUH. SO, YOU DO A BIT O' PAINTIN' AS WELL, DO YOU?
I-I'M SORRY. SEE, IN MANCHESTER THERE WAS THIS GIRL, ELSPETH WADE...
UHM. I KNOW THE WADES. YOU'D BEST COME WITH ME SO I CAN FIND YOU A BED.

YOU, UHM, YOU WERE RIGHT. HE FELL ASLEEP STRAIGHT AWAY.
THERE ARE PROBABLY THINGS THAT YOU, UHM, YOU SHOULD BE GETTING ON WITH...
AH, I'M IN NO GREAT HURRY. I WAS JUST ADMIRIN' YOUR PICTURE HERE.
WOULD I BE RIGHT IN THINKIN' THIS WAS BOYLSTON STREET SUBWAY, NOW?
UHM... YES. YES, IT IS.
IT'S AN IMAGINATIVE INTERPRETATION, OBVIOUSLY...
WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOIN', THAT'S PLAIN. I WAS JUST MARVELLIN' AT THE LITTLE FELLER CHEWIN' THE LADY'S LEG.
Y'KNOW, THERE WAS A DREADFUL ACCIDENT AT BOYLSTON STREET, SUMMER BEFORE LAST. PEOPLE DEAD, BODIES UNRECOVERED. A GAS EXPLOSION, SO THEY RECKONED.
US BOYS FROM THE DEPARTMENT ALL ASSUMED IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE CITY'S *LIABILITY*, FROM HOW THEY KEPT IT OUT THE *PAPERS*.
IT'S VERY *REAL* LOOKING, THIS, ISN'T IT?
IT'S, UHM, IT'S ONE OF SEVERAL VERSIONS. YOU'RE CLEARLY A CONNOISSEUR.
CAN I, UHM, CAN I GET YOU SOMETHING TO DRINK?
AH.
NOW YOU'RE TALKIN' A LANGUAGE I CAN UNDERSTAND.

SCOLLAY SQ. STATION
SUFFOLK SAVINGS BANK
SLATER'S SHOES
GOOD MORNING. HOW ARE YOU, UHM, HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
WH...?
OH, GOD. OH GOD, I REMEMBER. Y-YOU'RE MR. PITMAN. YOU'RE THE PHOTOGRAPHER.
OH GOD, I'M SO SORRY. I JUST TURNED UP HERE. YOU DON'T KNOW ME. I-I DIDN'T MEAN TO...
IT'S, UHM, IT'S ALL RIGHT. FROM WHAT YOU SAID, YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE, UHM, WITH THE STELLA SAPIENTE.
I KNOW THAT CAN BE, UHM, THAT CAN BE PRETTY BAD...
N-NO. NO, IT'S NOT THEM. I-IT'S ME. THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME.
I-IN MANCHESTER, LITTLE ELSPETH WADE. I-I DID SOMETHING TO HER...
I'M, UHM, I'M GUESSING THAT YOU DIDN'T. I'M GUESSING THE WADES DID SOMETHING TO YOU.
SEE, THEY, UHM, THEY CAN INTERFERE WITH PEOPLE'S MINDS.
WHAT THEY WANT IS TO EXCHANGE DREAMS AND REALITY...
S-SO... THE BUSINESS WITH ELSPETH, MY MISSING THREE WEEKS, I-IT WAS SOME KIND OF ILLUSION, IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

WELL, UH...
I MEAN, SURE. THAT'S, UHM, THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING.
LOOK, YOU'VE, UHM, YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT, AND I CAN SYMPATHIZE. STAY HERE AS LONG AS YOU NEED.
I THINK I'VE, UHM, I THINK I'VE GOT AN IDEA WHO YOU MUST BE...
Y-YOU MEAN I DIDN'T EVEN INTRODUCE...? OH, GOD, I'M SO SORRY. M-MY NAME'S ROBERT BLACK.
I-I'M A WRITER WHO WAS WITH THE HERALD IN NEW YORK. I'M HERE IN NEW ENGLAND RESEARCHING A BOOK ON ANCIENT TRADITIONS SURVIVING IN AMERICA...
UHM.
RONALD UNDERWOOD PITMAN. MY, UHM, MY FRIENDS CALL ME RONNIE..
LISTEN, I'LL, UHM, I'LL LEAVE YOU TO SETTLE IN. THERE'S, UHM, THERE'S A BODY OF WORK NEEDS ATTENDING TO.
MAYBE WHEN YOU'RE FEELING BETTER I CAN, UHM, I CAN ANSWER SOME OF YOUR QUESTIONS AND SHOW YOU AROUND.
THAT'S SWELL. THANKS FOR EVERYTHING, RONNIE. YOU'VE REALLY HELPED ME PUT THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE.
"ILLUSION".
HUH.

...AND SEE, THAT OVER THERE, THAT'S, UHM, THAT'S CHRIST CHURCH. ALL BOSTON'S TUNNELS RADIATE FROM ITS, UHM, FROM ITS CRYPT.
THE, UHM, THE FREEMASONS LIKE REVERE AND JACKSON, THEY USED THE TUNNELS WHEN THEY WERE DREAMING UP THEIR PLANS.
FREEMASONS, HUH? Y'KNOW, SINCE ARRIVING LAST WEEK, I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT SECRET SOCIETIES...
I MEAN, THEY'RE MORE INFLUENTIAL ON EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY THAN PEOPLE REALIZE, AREN'T THEY? THESE OCCULT GROUPS LIKE THE FREEMASONS OR THE STELLA SAPIENTE...
YES. YES, THEY ARE.
WHAT DO YOU, UHM, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE STELLA SAPIENTE?
YOU'VE VISITED SAINT ANSELM. DID YOU, UHM, DID YOU SEE MY PHOTOGRAPH?
WELL, SURE. AFTER NOTICING YOUR WORK AT MR. WHEATLEY'S PLACE, IT WAS THE PHOTOGRAPH AT THE COLLEGE THAT SUGGESTED YOU MIGHT KNOW THE ORDER...
UHM.
WELL, THEY DON'T REALLY LIKE ME, BUT THEY, UHM, THEY KNOW I'M DISCREET.
THAT, UHM, THAT PICTURE'S IN MY STUDIO, IF YOU'D LIKE TO SEE IT.
BOY, THIS IS REALLY SOMETHING. SO IS THIS THE PLACE WHERE YOU DO YOUR SOCIETY PORTRAIT WORK?
UHM, YES. YES, SOME OF IT.
I, UHM, I ALSO TAKE REFERENCE PHOTOGRAPHS IN HERE FOR MY, UHM, MY PAINTINGS.
THE, UHM, THE STELLA SAPIENTE PICTURE WAS TAKEN AT THEIR CHURCH HALL IN RHODE ISLAND. HERE IT IS...

YES, THIS IS THE ONE I SAW. THERE'S GARLAND AND LETICIA WHEATLEY, BUT WHO'S THIS FELLOW HERE?
UHM, THAT'S BUREN, VAN BUREN, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
THE, UHM, THE MAN BESIDE HIM, I THINK HIS NAME WAS WINSTON SOMETHING. ENGLISH FELLOW, TRADED IN PRECIOUS METALS.
THEN BEHIND THERE'S HENRY ANNESLEY AND, UHM, EDGAR WADE.
YES. TH-THERE WAS A PICTURE OF HIM AT ELSPETH'S WHEN I... WHEN I HAD MY HALLUCINATION.
RONNIE, IT FELT SO REAL. I-I WAS AWAKE. HOW COULD I HAVE DREAMED SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
THE STELLA SAPIENTE, THEY, UHM, THEY UNDERSTAND DREAMS DIFERENTLY.
THEY, UHM, THEY CAN ENTER THE DREAM-WORLD WHILE THEY'RE CONSCIOUS.
IT'S, UHM, IT'S ONE OF THEIR TECHNIQUES. IT'S LIKE, UHM, IT'S LIKE SOME OF PROFESSOR JUNG'S IDEAS, EXCEPT MORE PHYSICAL...
IT, UHM, IT TREATS THE UNCONSCIOUS AS A LITERAL UNDERWORLD. I, UHM, I FIND IT VERY USEFUL FOR MY PAINTINGS.
SO YOU'RE SAYING OCCULTISM INSPIRES YOUR ART?
HM... PRUSSIC ACID. WHAT'S THIS FOR?
OH, THAT'S, UHM, THAT'S JUST PART OF THE, UHM, THE DEVELOPING PROCESS.
AS FOR, UHM, AS FOR OCCULTISM AND ART, THEY'VE BEEN CONNECTED SINCE THE FIRST CAVE PAINTINGS.
THERE'S THE, UHM, THE SYMBOLISTS, THE SURREALISTS, THE CUBISTS... THEY'RE TRYING TO DEPICT SOMETHING MORE REAL THAN REALITY.
LET'S GO INTO THE OTHER ROOM...

YOU SEE, THERE'S, UHM, THERE'S REALISM AND THERE'S *REALISM.*
I SUPPOSE MY WORK IS, UHM, IS TRYING TO EXPRESS AN ABSOLUTE REALITY THAT LIES *BENEATH* THE WORLD THAT WE, UHM, THAT WE PERCEIVE.
AND THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE SYMBOLISING WITH ALL THESE *UNDER-GROUND* SCENES?
WHAT ABOUT THESE... WHAT DID YOU CALL THEM? THESE *FIGURES...*
OH, THE, UHM, THE *SAPROVORES.* YES, THEY, UHM, THEY TURN UP IN MOST OF MY WORK...
I UNDERSTAND... THEY'RE WHAT YOU'D CALL A *MOTIF*, I GUESS.
AND THEY REPRESENT THE ANGER OF THE DOWNTRODDEN LOWER *CLASSES*; AM I RIGHT? ERUPTING INTO *VIOLENCE*; LIKE WITH THE *POLICE* STRIKE...
UHMMM...
YES. YES, I SUPPOSE YOU, UHM, YOU *COULD* SEE IT LIKE THAT, COULDN'T YOU? YES, THAT'S VERY GOOD...
WELL, I ONCE THOUGHT ABOUT MAYBE BEING AN *ART* CRITIC.
SO TELL ME, WHAT DID YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAID YOU USED *OCCULT* TECHNIQUES TO INSPIRE YOUR WORK? I'D HAVE SAID IT'S MORE *POLITICAL...*

WELL, MY, UHM, MY WORK IS RELATED TO DREAMS. AND SO IS, UHM, SO IS POLITICS.
ROBERT, I, UHM, I COULD SHOW YOU MY METHOD IF YOU WANTED. I MEAN, I, UHM, I DON'T SHOW EVERYBODY, BUT...
I JUST FEEL THAT YOU, UHM, YOU DESERVE TO KNOW.
I-IS THIS THE STELLA SAPIENTE TECHNIQUE?
IT'S NOT, UHM, IT'S NOT REALLY THEIR TECHNIQUE. IT'S AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD THAT THEY'RE, UHM, THEY'RE EXPLOITING.
YOU SEE, BY, UHM, BY LITERALLY GOING UNDERGROUND, WE CAN REACH THE DREAM-WORLD.
IN MY, UHM, IN MY CELLAR. I CAN SHOW YOU...
SO... JUST BY GOING DOWNSTAIRS WE ENTER A KIND OF TRANCE?
UHM... YES. YES, IF YOU LIKE.
LISTEN, IT'S, UHM, IT'S VERY COLD DOWN BELOW. I'M USED TO IT, BUT YOU'LL, UHM, YOU'LL NEED THIS OLD OVERCOAT.
UH... THANKS. THAT'S VERY KIND.
RONNIE, I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE BEING SO GOOD TO ME. YOU HARDLY KNOW ME, AND YET YOU'RE GIVING ME ALL THIS HELP...
I'M, UHM, I'M NOT REALLY HELPING YOU. I DON'T THINK ANYONE CAN.
BUT YOU SEEM DECENT. YOU, UHM, YOU APPRECIATE MY WORK, AND I WANTED YOU TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE, UHM, YOU'RE INVOLVED IN.
I WANTED YOU SEE THE, UHM, THE BIGGER PICTURE, IF YOU LIKE.
SHALL WE?

I-I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN ABOUT THE *COLD.* AND I GUESS THIS LINKS UP WITH THOSE *TUNNELS* YOU TOLD ME ABOUT.
I-IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT BY COMING DOWN HERE I'M ENTERING A DIFFERENT STATE OF *AWARENESS...*
UHM. WELL, YOU *ARE.* IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER YOU, UHM, YOU BELIEVE IT.
YOU, UHM, YOU SAID YOU'D SEEN THAT *BOOK* OF THEIRS, AT SAINT *ANSELM.* IT MENTIONS, UHM, IT MENTIONS A *REDEEMER.*
S-SURE. H-HE'S THE FELLOW WHO'S MEANT TO MAKE "ALL THE EARTH PUT RIGHT", ISN'T THAT IT?
I FIGURE HE'S A *MESSIAH* FIGURE WHO THEY BELIEVE WILL BRING ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN...
I, UHM, I SUPPOSE SO, BUT IT'S, UHM, IT'S NOT REALLY WHAT YOU'D CALL *HEAVEN.*
IT'S THE, UHM, THE WORLD OF *DREAMS* THAT'S BEEN, UHM, THAT'S BEEN SUPPRESSED BY OUR REALITY. THEY, UHM, THEY WANT TO *RESTORE* IT.
THEN... YOU'RE SAYING THEY BELIEVE THEY CAN CHANGE HUMAN *PSYCHOLOGY,* WITH OUR UNCONSCIOUS MINDS DOMINATING OUR RATIONAL SELVES?
THAT'S, UHM, THAT'S ONE WAY OF LOOKING AT IT. LIKE I SAY, THEY, UHM, THEY INTERPRET IT MORE LITERALLY.
YOU SEE, UHM, IN REMOTE OR BURIED SPACES WITHOUT ANYONE TO, UHM, TO BEAR WITNESS...
WELL, THE, UHM, THE IDEA IS THAT DIFFERENT *THINGS* CAN HAPPEN. DIFFERENT THINGS CAN, UHM, CAN *EXIST.*

W-WELL, I GUESS SO, IF BY DESCENDING PHYSICALLY WE'VE ENTERED SOME HYPNOTIC DREAM CONDITION.
A-ARE YOU SAYING THAT DOWN HERE WE CAN EXPERIENCE THINGS FROM DREAMS AS REAL IN SOME WAY?
AS REAL IN EVERY WAY. YOU'RE, UHM, YOU'RE A JOURNALIST. YOU COULD EVEN INTERVIEW ONE OF THEM IF YOU, UHM, IF YOU WANTED.
WHY DON'T YOU, UHM, WHY DON'T YOU SIT ON THIS, UHM, THIS BOX OVER HERE...
I-IF YOU SAY SO. IS THAT AN ENTRANCE TO THE TUNNELS OVER THERE? I-IT SURE IS BIG...
IT, UHM, IT HAS TO BE. MOST OF THE, UHM, MOST OF THE CELLARS IN NORTH END HAVE ENTRANCES, ALTHOUGH USUALLY SMALLER ONES.
IF YOU, UHM, IF YOU SIT FACING AWAY FROM THE TUNNEL MOUTH, THAT WOULD, UHM, THAT WOULD BE BEST.
I'LL JUST, UHM, I'LL JUST GO AND GET THINGS READY...
WH-WHAT, FOR THIS MESMERISM DEMONSTRATION OR WHATEVER IT IS?
IF THAT'S, UHM, IF THAT'S HOW YOU PREFER TO VIEW IT, THEN, UHM, THEN YES.
PLEASE REMEMBER, I'M NOT, UHM, I'M NOT TRYING TO STARTLE YOU. I JUST THINK THAT, UHM, THAT YOU SHOULD BE GIVEN A CHANCE TO UNDERSTAND.
AND WHATEVER ELSE YOU DO, PLEASE REMEMBER NOT TO, UHM, NOT TO LOOK ROUND. I'LL, UHM, I'LL BE BACK PRESENTLY...

THERE. THAT'S, UHM, THAT'S GOOD. YOU SIT THERE...
LIKE THIS, YES?
SIT LIKE THIS.

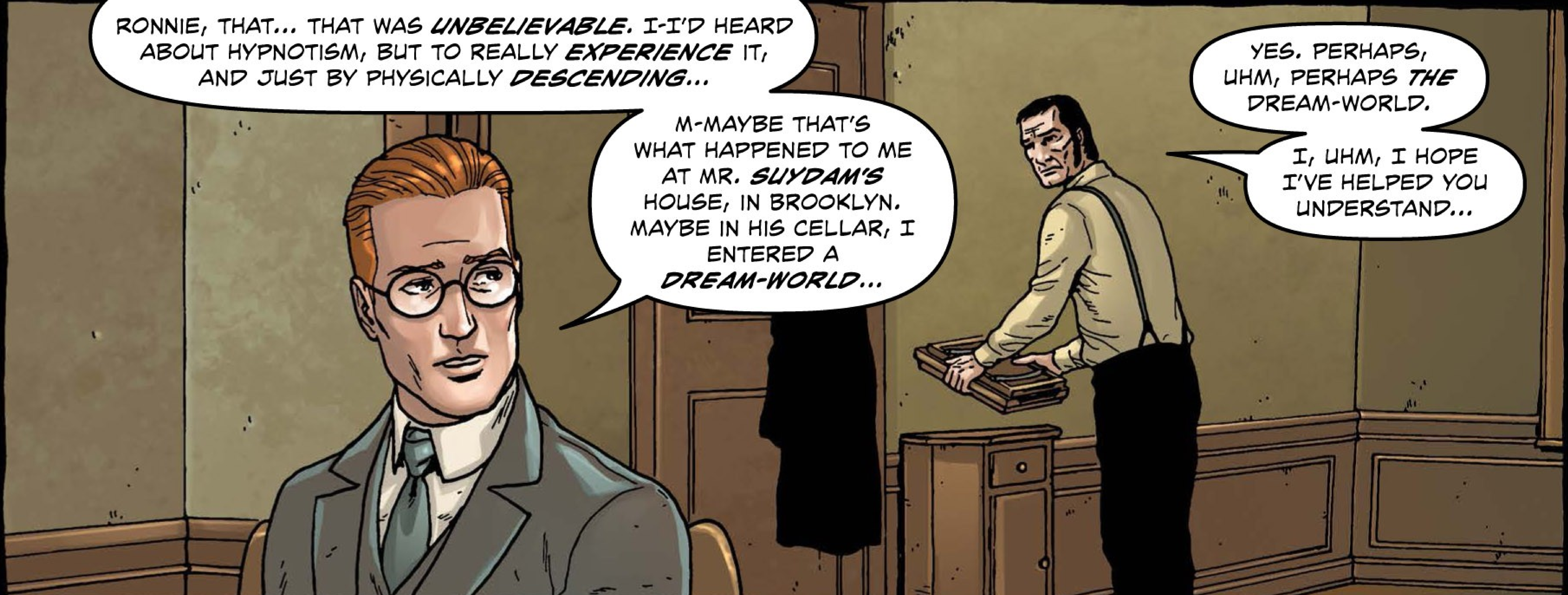
ROBERT, THIS IS, UHM, THIS IS KING GEORGE. YOU CAN, UHM, YOU CAN ASK HIM ANYTHING.
KING GEORGE, THIS IS, UHM, THIS IS ROBERT. ROBERT'S HERE TO, UHM, TO TALK TO YOU, AND THAT'S ALL.
YES. I LIKE ROBERT. ROBERT HAS PRETTY HAIR.
IT IS RED ONES I LIKE BEST.
UH...
I, UH, I MEAN...
WH...
WH-WHAT ARE YOU?
KING GEORGE? ROBERT WANTS TO, UHM, TO KNOW WHAT...
I KNOW. I KNOW WHAT ROBERT WANTS.
ROBERT, WE ARE BOYS. WE ARE BOYS WHO WORK DOWNSTAIRS, YES? I AM A GOOD BOY.
I AM A GOOD BOY, WHO WORKS HARD. DO YOU WORK HARD, ROBERT?
W-WELL, I... YES. YES, I DO. I WORK HARD.
K-KING GEORGE, WH-WHERE... WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?
FROM BETWEEN MOTHER'S LEGS, YES? YES. THAT IS FUNNY.
BUT TO NOT BE FUNNY, WE ARE DOWNSTAIRS FROM WORLD, UPSTAIRS FROM DREAM. WE ARE HALFWAY IN MIDDLE.

I-I SEE. AND HOW MANY... HOW MANY BOYS LIKE YOU ARE THERE?
OH, MANY. MANY GOOD BOYS. MORE THAN FIVE.
THIS IS UNDER BOSTON ONLY, YES? IN WHOLE WORLD IS MANY, MANY MORE. IS AS MANY AS... AS MORE THAN FIVE!
BUT IN BOSTON, WE ARE HAPPY. ARE YOU HAPPY IN BOSTON, ROBERT?
I... NO. NO, I-I DON'T THINK I'D BE HAPPY ANYWHERE RIGHT NOW.
ROBERT'S HAD SOME, UHM, SOME BAD THINGS HAPPEN. IN MANCHESTER HE, UHM, HE MET THE LITTLE WADE GIRL...
OH. OH, YES. THE OLD MAN WHO IS ANOTHER OLD MAN WHO IS A GIRL WHO IS OTHER PEOPLE, YES?
POOR ROBERT.
ROBERT, IT IS BAD THAT YOU ARE NOT HAPPY.
THESE ONES WHO HURT YOU, THEY ARE YANKEES, YES? THEY HAVE MANY THINGS, AND THEY DO NOT WORK HARD.
THEY DO NOT WORK HARD LIKE US, ROBERT, AND ALWAYS WE ARE BENEATH THEM.
BUT ONE DAY, WE EAT THEIR BODIES. YOU MUST SMILE, ROBERT.
Y-YES. YES, THANK YOU. I WILL.
H-HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT WHAT GOES ON UP ABOVE, IN BOSTON?
WELL, UHM, KING GEORGE HAS BEEN HERE A LONG TIME.
OH, YES. LONG TIME. MISTER REVERE IN HIS STOCKINGS, PLUMP LITTLE LEGS. OH, YES. EVERYTHING HAPPEN IN BOSTON, WE KNOW WHAT IT IS.

S-SO YOU KEEP UP WITH CURRENT EVENTS...?
WE DO BEST WE CAN. THERE IS THE NO-POLICEMAN FIGHTING, YES? ABOVE, THEY SAY MORE THAN FIVE ARE MADE DEAD.
WE KNOW OF MORE THAN THIS, YES? SOME DEAD THEY ARE NOT FIND.
THIS IS HAPPY TIME, BUT NOT MORE GOOD THAN SWEET TIME.
SWEET TIME? WHAT'S...?
KING GEORGE IS, UHM, IS TALKING ABOUT THE MOLASSES EXPLOSION IN, UHM, IN JANUARY...
OH, YES! YES, AFTER COLD FESTIVAL, WE ARE SO HAPPY WE DO NOT BELIEVE!
MANY, THEY ARE DEAD. SOME THE FACE THEY DO NOT KNOW, WHERE IT IS COVERED IN SWEETNESS. EVERYWHERE THERE IS CANDY...
THEN YOU... YOU REALLY EAT DEAD PEOPLE? I-ISN'T THAT CANNIBALISM?
NO. NO, ROBERT, YOU ARE WRONG. IF I EAT MY BROTHER GEORGE WASHINGTON, THAT IS BAD. EATING UPSTAIRS DEAD, THAT IS WORK.
AND ALSO, WE DO NOT SEE THAT YOU ARE USE THEM FOR ANYTHING.
WE SAY "UPSTAIRS PEOPLE DO NOT MIND".
B-BUT, I MEAN, IF THEY KNEW ABOUT YOU...
WH-WHY DO YOU TRUST MR. PITMAN NOT TO REVEAL YOU? WHY ARE YOU TRUSTING ME?
YOU ARE GOOD BOYS. RONNIE, HE IS TO US LIKE OUR FAMILY, YES?
AND YOU, ROBERT, YOU DO YOUR WORK, AND THEN YOU ARE GONE. OUR WORRY IS FOR YOU.

F-FOR ME? SO... SO IS THIS MY UNCONSCIOUS, VOICING BURIED ANXIETIES?
YES, IT'S, UHM... KING GEORGE? WHERE, UHM, WHERE ARE YOU GOING? I THOUGHT WE'D, UHM, WE'D AGREED...
NO. NO, RONNIE. YOU ARE NOT BOSS. YOU ARE ONLY LITTLE BOY.
I LIKE TO TALK TO ROBERT. AND I LIKE TO SMELL HIM.
Y-YOU... YOU REALLY DON'T NEED TO... I-I MEAN...
ROBERT, IT'S, UHM, IT'S ALL RIGHT. JUST, UHM, JUST SIT STILL...
YES, YES. IT IS ONLY FOR SMELLING AND TALKING. IT IS NOT FOR WORK.
ROBERT, I MUST TELL YOU THAT IN ROT IS A GREAT COMFORT, YES? WITH ROT IS ALL THE WORLD MADE...
OHH. OHHH...
IT IS ONLY NOTHING DO NOT ROT. MEAT ROT. WOOD ROT. STONE ROT. IN BOSTON AND AMERICA AND ALL OF WORLD IS ROT.
DOWN HERE, THE ROT WE EAT. AND UP ABOVE US, ROBERT, YOU ARE WORK FOR NEWSPAPER, MAKE STORIES OF BAD PEOPLE, YES?
ABOVE, THE ROT YOU EAT.
ROBERT, LISTEN. WHEN IN CEMETERIES YOU ARE SAD, REMEMBER TO US THEY ARE FARMS, YES? THEY ARE ORCHARDS.
NNN...
EVERYBODY HAS THE LIFE WITH PURPOSE, ROBERT. NOBODY IS GO TO WASTE. THE ONES ALONE AND WITHOUT LOVE, AT LAST THEY ARE ENJOYED.
ROBERT, YOU ARE GOOD BOY. IN THE ROT, BE HAPPY, YES?

YES. YES, I WILL. I'LL BE HAPPY.
GOOD. GOOD BOY. NOW WE ARE HAPPY ALL OF US.
RONNIE, I AM GO NOW DOWN FOR TELL OF ROBERT TO MY BROTHER MARY PICKFORD.
I HAVE EYEBURN WITH THIS LAMP. GIVE ME YOUR HAND BACK TO MY OWN GOOD DIRT, YES?
UHM, YES. YES, OF COURSE.
ROBERT, I'LL, UHM, I'LL BE BACK IN JUST A MOMENT. PLEASE STAY WHERE, UHM, WHERE YOU ARE.
THE, UHM, THE ENTRANCE IS A STEP IN FRONT OF YOU, KING GEORGE...
YES. YES, FEEL DRAFT. SO, RONNIE, TELL ME NOW. IS ROBERT BROTHER OF OTHER RED AND BLACK ONE?
THERE.
IT'S, UHM, IT'S VERY COLD DOWN HERE, ISN'T IT?
SHALL WE, UHM, SHALL WE GO BACK UPSTAIRS?


RONNIE, THAT... THAT WAS UNBELIEVABLE. I-I'D HEARD ABOUT HYPNOTISM, BUT TO REALLY EXPERIENCE IT, AND JUST BY PHYSICALLY DESCENDING...
M-MAYBE THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO ME AT MR. SUYDAM'S HOUSE, IN BROOKLYN. MAYBE IN HIS CELLAR, I ENTERED A DREAM-WORLD...
YES. PERHAPS, UHM, PERHAPS THE DREAM-WORLD.
I, UHM, I HOPE I'VE HELPED YOU UNDERSTAND...

BOY, YOU SURE HAVE! BEFORE YOU EXPLAINED ABOUT THE, THE BUSINESS WITH ELSPETH BEING A *DREAM*, I-I WAS KIND OF FALLING TO *PIECES...*
WELL, THAT'S NOT WHAT I, UHM...
THAT IS, UHM, I'M GLAD YOU FEEL BETTER.
ROBERT, PERHAPS YOU, UHM, PERHAPS YOU NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN EXPLAIN ABOUT DREAMS MORE *CLEARLY...*
BUT... I MEAN, AFTER THAT *DEMOSTRATION*, I DON'T SEE HOW...
NO, NO, I'M, UHM, I'M AN ARTIST WHO WORKS WITH, UHM, WITH *IMAGES.* YOU NEED SOMEONE MORE, UHM, MORE *ARTICULATE.* MAYBE ANOTHER WRITER...
THERE'S, UHM, THERE'S AN AUTHOR HERE IN BOSTON WHO, UHM, WHO KNOWS ALL ABOUT THE DREAM-WORLD.
HIS NAME'S *CARVER...*
OH, RONNIE, I'M SO SORRY. I'VE BEEN HERE, WHAT, TEN DAYS NOW? I REALLY SHOULD BE MOVING ON.
IF YOU CAN TELL ME WHERE THIS CARVER PERSON LIVES, I CAN BE ON MY *WAY...*
ROBERT, I'VE, UHM, I'VE ENJOYED HAVING YOU HERE.
IT'S, UHM, IT'S JUST RANDALL CARVER COULD BE MORE *HELPFUL.*
RONNIE, I COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND. JUST LET ME GET MY THINGS, THEN YOU CAN GIVE ME DIRECTIONS.
BESIDES, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK TO GET ON WITH...
WELL, THERE'S, UHM, THERE'S A NEW PIECE NEEDS DEVELOPING. IT'S CALLED "THE POLICE STRIKE: A SETTLEMENT."
I'LL, UHM, I'LL SEE YOU IN A MOMENT.

...SO THAT'S DOWN ATLANTIC AVENUE TO THE CONGRESS STREET BRIDGE, THEN ON TO TUDOR STREET?
THANKS FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY, RONNIE... AND ALL THE BEST WITH YOUR "SETTLEMENT" PROJECT. I KNEW ALL ALONG YOUR WORK WAS POLITICAL.
WELL, THANK YOU. YOU'RE, UHM, YOU'RE VERY ASTUTE.
GOOD LUCK, ROBERT. GOOD LUCK WITH, UHM, GOOD LUCK WITH EVERYTHING.

MR. CARVER? I'M SORRY, YOU DON'T KNOW ME.
I'M A WRITER WHO'S TRYING TO GET A PICTURE OF THE *REAL* NEW ENGLAND.
MY NAME'S *BLACK*.
Providence

~~August 19th~~

September 10th

September 10th

September 10th

~~I'm on a bus. A bus stopped for me. It's going to Boston. In Manchester. I~~

~~it's been three weeks not just a night I saw myself in the car it was raining what have I done? Please please please tell me that I haven't~~

~~I am Robert Black. I'm not anybody else. I am Robert Black. I am a grownup, and I am a man. I am Robert Black. I am a man who is going to Boston. It is Wednesday, September 10th. I am Robert Black. I am not the sort of man who would~~ [redacted]

September 11th

I'm in Boston, at the Henchman Street home and studio of Mr. Ronald Underwood Pitman, where I stayed last night. Last night was Wednesday, the 10th of September, and today's Thursday the 11th. So that's good. ~~When I was in Manchester~~

~~Something happened to me when~~

~~The dates of these entries have a big gap because~~

This isn't any good. I'm still having these panics, and I still don't know what's happened to me, to my mind. I think I need to sleep, and not write anything until I've taken all of this in. Oh, God.

September 16th

Today is Tuesday. I'm still staying with Ronnie Pitman, who seems to be a very kind man, and I'm starting to feel a little better after having at least begun to rationalize some of the things that happened to me— or that seemed to happen to me — when I was in Manchester. I'm still not comfortable with talking about a lot of it directly, and I still can't entirely separate established fact from feverish hallucination but I'll do my best to give as clear an account as I'm capable of, even though that may not be very clear at all.

The last time I was writing coherently in these pages, or when I believed myself to be coherent at any rate, was when I was in Saint Anselm College's library and hurrying through their copy of Hali's Booke of the Wisdom of the Stars so that I could copy down as much as I needed before the place closed. I was feeling pretty strange after copying out all of that peculiar alphabet and those ominous-sounding passages about Redeemers and Dark Messengers and everything. I can't believe it was less than a week ago. Anyway, I called Dr. Wantage so that he could lock the book away safely and escort me out of the building. As he was doing so we fell into talking, and I gradually understood that he was telling me he'd been looking forward to meeting me since Father Race had told him about me a few weeks back, in August. I mumbled something about how I thought it was only yesterday, but I don't think he understood that I was being literal rather than just making some throwaway remark about how time had flown.

So there it is: I've somehow lost three weeks, and that's only a fraction of what happened to me in Manchester. Even so, it's the part that I want to focus on

for the moment, before I attempt to comprehend the other stuff, the stuff that's even worse. How could I, or anyone, lose three weeks of time so that they were convinced that it had passed in a single night? Given that all these things started happening to me right after I'd closed the back cover on Hali's unsettling book, it's very tempting to assume that all of what I experienced, or thought I experienced, was some supernaturally-inflicted madness brought on by merely reading this cursed volume, as if it were the physically existing equivalent of Robert W. Chambers imaginary (and Sous le Monde-derived) King in Yellow. But of course that isn't possible, and so straightforward journalistic reasoning tells me that it's more probable that what appeared to happen to me was some kind of hoax or trick, deliberately designed to torment me and make me doubt my own sanity. As for who'd have a motive (or the means) to do such a thing, I can only suppose that this might be the Stella Sapiente method for scaring away anybody who seems to be prying into the order's clandestine history.

This supposition actually ties in with some of the things that Ronnie Pitman, who is familiar with the order from being their trusted photographer of choice, has told me about their philosophy and their techniques. According to Ronnie, if I've understood him correctly, the Stella Sapiente have methods, possibly taken from Hali's book, for sort of reversing the polarity of the human mind, so that Professor Jung's unconscious, dreaming mind, rather than being buried beneath our rational everyday conscious mind instead rises to usurp the place of our ordinary waking intelligence. At least, I think it's something like that which I've been able to piece together from little things Ronnie has said, and from some of the things I read in that damned book. I guess that the passages about how one day all the waking world would be subjugated to the world of dreams were really talking about the process described above, using the apocalyptic-sounding stuff as a kind of metaphor and talking about the whole world when what they really meant was the psychological world of one individual.

As for how the order accomplish this reversal of the conscious and unconscious minds in their intended victim, I think Ronnie said that it was some kind of induced hypnotic trance... or at least, that he didn't disagree with me when that was what I suggested. From the very little I understand of hypnotism, I believe that it's possible to sort of pre-hypnotize people in a way whereby you implant some kind of trigger, say perhaps a certain word, or a certain image, or a certain action which, when it's activated, will plunge the subject into a full-blown hypnotic state. I can't help wondering if something like that wasn't what happened to me, although I still can't figure out how that could end up in me

losing three weeks, or what the hypnotic trigger might have been, or who might have implanted it. Taking those things in order, I suppose it's just about conceivable that this supposed hypnotic command might have included a stipulation that I immediately erase all my memories of the last three weeks since the time the command was implanted... which was when? And who by? And what was I really doing for those three weeks, so that nobody in Manchester or at St. Anselm ran into me or knew where I was?

I suppose the most logical candidate for who might have hypnotized me in the first place would be Mr. Jenkins, the strange fellow who drove me from Bedford to Manchester, and who figured heavily in the horrific nightmare that I endured on retiring that evening at Mrs. Macey's house in Goffs Falls. I may or may not have nodded off in his car... or that may just have been part of the confusing dream I had later... but it was definitely on the way to St. Anselm that I started to notice that things were a little odd: it was pouring down with rain, like in a thunderstorm, and the trees by the roadside all looked like they were already starting to change color in preparation for fall. Then, when I got to St. Anselm it was sunny, the trees were green, there wasn't a puddle to be seen anywhere, and Father Race told me that it hadn't rained for weeks. Looking at it like that, it has to be Mr. Jenkins putting me into some sort of trance pretty much as soon as I got into his car, making me imagine all the business with the rainstorm and the trees changing color. Then, I guess, he could have implanted his hypnotic command that I should... what? Maybe that I should have some sort of experience at Mrs. Macey's house that somehow lasted three weeks, and then forget all about it? That sounds wildly unlikely, but thinking about it, when I finally emerged from Mrs. Macey's dreadful house on the night I had all my complicated nightmares and took shelter at Dr. North's — and that must have actually been September 9th and not August 18th — Mr. Jenkins' Buick was the first thing I saw. And didn't he say, when he was driving me to St. Anselm, that he lived with his mother down in the far south of Manchester, right on the border of New Hampshire and Massachusetts? I didn't register it at the time, but looking back that sounds to me like he was talking about Goffs Falls... although that would imply that Mrs. Macey was Mr. Jenkins mother, and outside of my obscene dream with Mr. Jenkins as a gigantic suckling rat, I don't see how that's possible unless Mrs. Macey was a real lot older than she looked. Still, they don't have to be mother and son to be in some sort of strange partnership together and to have pulled some hypnotic trick on me, even if neither of them really looked like

the faintly aristocratic and snooty types that, I'm starting to get the impression, make up the Stella Sapiente.

I've also just noticed a serious flaw in my above hypothesis: it wasn't Mr. Jenkins who suggested I should lodge in Goffs Falls. It was Father Race who said there might be rooms available there if central Manchester should prove to be fully booked up during the busy month of August, it was Dr. North who pointed me in the general direction of Goffs Falls, ~~and it was little~~ and it was someone else completely who told me precisely how to get there and first suggested Mrs. Macey's place as a likely residence. I may have just come through some awful bout of mental illness or something, but I don't think that even I am crazy enough to suspect that all of these people were acting together in some sort of evil conspiracy to drive me out of my wits. But then... and this is a disturbing thought... how can I be sure that my memories of how I got to Mrs. Macey's house are accurate, and not just false hypnotic memories that had been instilled in me at some point? I suppose I can rule out my meetings with Father Race and Hector North being hallucinations, since Father Race clearly recalled my earlier visit, and I must have met North in order to have been given his address in Orange Street so that I could flee to it in the middle of that confusing night. Which, really, only leaves

No. No, if all this self-examination is going to be of any use to me at all, then much as I don't want to and much as I'd do nearly anything to avoid the subject, I'm going to have to think about Elspeth. Elspeth Wade. There. That's her full name. If that's really who I met, or if Elspeth Wade is even real and not just part of some demented hypnotic dream. But then I know she must be real, because both Dr. Wantage and Father Race knew her and her family. It was Race who told me that her surname was Wade, and it was Wantage who told me that her late father, Edgar Wade, had been a leading member of the Stella Sapiente. So if I'm supposing that Mr. Jenkins and Mrs. Macey were both connected to the Stella Sapiente, and were both in league together against me, then what am I to make of Elspeth Wade? I'd like to believe that there is a real Elspeth Wade who is nothing like the girl I met – I didn't describe her to Race or Wantage, and neither of them saw me when I was with her – but then the fact of her apparent familial connection with the order that I'm investigating would seem to overwhelmingly suggest that she must be a part of this plot or whatever it is that I imagine has happened to me. It was Elspeth who directed me to Mrs. Macey's house and suggested I stay there; it was Elspeth who called

at Dr. North's house early on the morning of what must have been September 10th and delivered news that prompted North and his companion Mr. Montague to pack their bags and leave town. ~~and it was Elspeth who~~

See, what it is, after Henry Wantage had shown me out of the library, stunned me with the news that I'd apparently lost three weeks of my life and then had bid me goodbye and walked off, I turned around ~~and there was Elspeth~~ and there was what I thought was Elspeth Wade. It's no good. I still can't really accept that there was a real thirteen year-old girl involved in what I imagined, even if I'd just learned that she was the daughter of Beelzebub himself. Anyway... and according to my interpretation of what Ronnie says, all of what followed Dr. Wantage's departure must have been some sort of induced dream, perhaps triggered by something in Hali's Booke... I next imagined that I went with her back to her house further up Orange Street from the place that North and Montague had just hurriedly vacated. I must have gone there with somebody, because on the way I bought a new raincoat to replace the one I'd left a Mrs. Macey's house in the middle of the night, and I can see the new one hanging on the back of the door to Ronnie Pitman's spare room, where I'm writing this. When I was at ~~Elspeth's~~, at the person who I thought was Elspeth's house, ~~I think I might have~~ I had this dreadful hallucinatory episode of something that couldn't possibly have happened, and that was enough to send me fleeing out into the torrential thunderstorm that was just then breaking outside.

Actually, that's another thing: did that thunderstorm actually happen, or was that just a part of my mental breakdown or whatever it was? Given that my new raincoat is still very faintly damp from the soaking that it got after five or six days I have to accept that it was probably real, although the coincidence of it being a real stormy fall day when I fled Manchester in a panic, just the same as it had been in my hallucination when I was only just arriving in Manchester, seems a little hard to credit. However, whilst it may have really been pouring down with rain, the thing that I saw – that I thought I saw – next was conclusively a part of some kind of feverish hallucination or mirage. I had a moment when I thought I saw Mr. Jenkins' Buick Roadster driving down the road towards me, with him at the wheel, and when the car passed me there was a spine-chilling instant when I thought I saw myself, my own distinctive form and likeness, sitting there beside Mr. Jenkins in the passenger seat and wearing my old grey-blue raincoat, looking like I didn't have a care in the world.

In that moment, I was pierced by... I don't know. A sensation, an impression, an idea that was so overpowering that it went beyond fear. It felt as if all of my life, all of my mind, all of the universe were irrecoverably destroyed right there and then, all of the continuities of sense and cause and reason that there are in the world suddenly snapped like cotton threads to reveal a screaming, senseless blizzard of a billion unconnected facts that I knew to be the awful truth of human existence, the meaningless noise and chaos that forever churns beneath our desperate attempts to impose a sane and reasonable narrative. I had a devastating perception of Manchester as the very heart of madness and mental darkness; a great infolding of incomprehensible forces, terror upon terror, until the town was somehow dense with dread, a tightly-furled black rosebud of anathema and alienation. I also understood that we fragile human beings do not ever truly lose our minds, as if it were by accident: we deliberately let them go, allowing them to slip between our fingers in the hurricane of being when their content is too much for us to bear. I'm still not really talking about Elopotn, am I?

I think I was barely a personality at all as I ran through the punishing rain out of Manchester, reduced to a frantically scrabbling primitive impulse for escape. I don't know how long I ran, and indeed most of my memories after that point are confused and unreliable, little flashes of things that might have actually happened amidst all the day-mares and delusions. I think, for example, that I was given a ride by a kindly older couple in an open truck, who'd seen me running through the downpour and had taken pity on me, although I think my wild-eyed and mumbling demeanour meant they were probably both relieved to drop me off near a bus route that would take me to Boston. Of the bus journey itself I recall even less. I think I may even have dozed off into a kind of traumatised sleep, during which I was probably making all sorts of noise and disturbing the other passengers, although I only deduce this from the strong dislike that the bus-driver was showing towards me when he woke me up and roughly bundled me off the bus after it got to Boston. Dazed and disorientated, barely aware of where I was and trying to block out the yammering horror of where I'd been, my first glimpse of Boston was an unbelievable and shattering vista that only made my condition worse.

When my eyes finally and reluctantly comprehended what they were looking at, at first I was convinced that the whole world had become an extension of my personal madness. It seemed at that moment as if what had happened to me in Manchester had only been my individual experience of a far broader mental breakdown, or end of the world, that was happening to

everybody. All around me was a tableau like something from the mind of Hieronymus Bosch. Wives were being raped in front of their husbands. Weeping and begging, husbands were having arms broken in front of their wives. Everywhere were screams, and bellows of rage, and gunshots, and terrified horses, and shattering glass. Bricks were somehow raining from the black night sky, and the faces in the hell-light from the blazing wheelbarrows and wagons were those of the damned or the demonic. There were frightened troopers with their bayonets fixed, shouting commands in voices that were barely broken, and absurdly, in the midst of that appalling carnage I found myself thinking that, surely, Wednesday was a school night. I think I even started laughing at one point, but quickly choked it off because, to be honest, I hadn't been sure that I could. I remember thinking, quite seriously, that I didn't want to still be laughing when a brick dashed in my skull or when a sixteen year-old boy ran me through with a bayonet. As it was, people didn't seem to even notice me as I stumbled numb and speechless among the knots of clawing, punching, pillaging humanity that swarmed there in the bedlam streets. I felt as if I were a paying spectator observing some horrific theatrical re-enactment.

Eventually I found myself in an open space that seemed to be at the very epicentre of the chaos and violence — I later learned that this was Scollay Square — just standing in front of a vandalised barroom and gaping at the hideous destruction seething all around me, while a weary-looking off-duty policeman sat alone there in the rubble of the bar, attempting without much success to drink himself into insensibility. I started babbling to him, and God only knows what I might have said or blurted out in my deranged and disconnected state, but he seemed to take it all very calmly and had one of those manners that would lead you to suspect he'd seen it all before. I evidently at least managed to convey that I was hoping to find the house of Ronald Pitman at 21 Henchman Street, whereupon the hangdog Irish copper offered his (probably accurate) opinion that I'd never get there on my own, and said that he'd escort me.

I don't know whether it was because I was still affected by my hypnotic episode or whatever it was in Manchester, but our subsequent walk through the squealing, bleeding and shattering Boston streets, along with our attendant conversation, was precisely something from a dream. Whether because of the officer's aura of sad authority or my own wide-eyed and tremulous appearance we seemed to be largely left alone as we picked our way through the crowd of combatants, which gradually thinned as we reached the maze of side-streets at its outskirts. As we walked, the policeman — I think I remember that he said his

name was O'Brien – told me a little about what was happening. From what I remember, him and his fellow officers had been working in intolerable conditions for pennies, without a pay rise since back at the end of the last century. They'd made polite and reasonable requests for a modest raise, but it seems that Boston's governor, one Mr. Coolidge, had taken advantage of the current red scare and decided to make political capital for himself by turning down their demands and forcing them into a strike. That way, he could brutally suppress it and come out looking like the hero who'd stood up to the Bolsheviks, rather than the self-serving weasel who'd put his own city through literal hell and driven hard-working American policemen out of their jobs, just so that he could get a few kind words from Woodrow "I kept us out of the war" Wilson.

We finally got to Ronald Pitman's house in the run-down looking North End. Pitman, a likeably serious and almost morose bohemian figure with a slow and deliberating way about him, answered the door and, unbelievably, as soon as he'd heard that I was familiar with the Wheatleys and the Wade family he agreed to take me in and give me a bed for the night. I was so obviously exhausted that he rushed me upstairs to his spare room before I'd had a chance to say goodbye to Officer O'Brien and to thank him for accompanying me through the hazardous battlefield of Boston to Pitman's door. Oh, well, I expect I shall run into him again before I leave Boston for wherever I'm headed next. I hope so. He's a genuinely nice, kindly, ordinary working man, and he seems very wise and at peace with himself. All the time I was with him, I felt safe and protected in some way.

I ought to say something about Ronnie Pitman, who also has a kind of big-brotherly and protective air about him, although probably that's just me projecting my own emotional needs onto someone else as usual. Ronnie, though – I think what impresses me about him is that he's a genuine working artist who manages to scratch an honorable living out of his paintings and photography. I mean, this is what he does, every day, to earn his living. That's exactly the situation that I want to be in one day, maybe when I write this novel, and actually seeing Ronnie as a living example of someone who'd made that dream a reality is sort of inspiring, and makes me think that I could perhaps genuinely accomplish something if I just sat down and showed the same serious application to my work that Ronnie does. He really is a good-natured individual, very slow and deliberate in what he says, so that you can almost see him thinking carefully about every word, knitting and relaxing his faintly troubled-looking brow as he does so.

As for his work, while I'm by no means an expert on the subject, his photography seems to me to be very good and distinctive. He seems to bring out a real liveliness and animation in his subjects. I mean, even in the picture that I saw in Athol of Willard Wheatley clowning around on a sofa, he'd managed to capture that congenitally deformed and belligerently angry young man looking happy and laughing like he's having a whale of a time. That right there, it seems to me, indicates a real gift that Ronnie has for the kind of portrait work that he does. As for his paintings, I may be letting my affection and gratitude towards the man himself color my opinions here, but I think they're both magnificent and truly original. He works in a variety of different styles — he seems to enjoy experimenting with different techniques — and is very accomplished in what he does, but it's the unique vision and the subject matter that is the most arresting thing about the few paintings by Ronnie that I've seen around the house while I've been staying here. The imagery is simply extraordinary, like nothing I've ever seen before, even in the most delirious imaginings of a Beardsley or a Sidney Sime. Most of his paintings portray subterranean scenes, which I'm guessing is his metaphor for the buried, hidden and repressed areas in the human mind and in human society. The scenes depicted are all superficially grotesque and horrifying, in the way that a lot of Goya's work can be, until you think about what he's trying to say in his use of this macabre symbology. There's also a rather grisly sense of humor at work in many of the pieces that somewhat undercuts their apparent ghastliness.

The most disturbing and at the same time the most compelling element in Pitman's work is represented by the recurring figures that seem to turn up in nearly every painting. These are crouching, subhuman creatures that seem to be halfway between the human form and that of a hyena. They seem to come in a wide range of sizes, for though the majority of these peculiar and feral-looking entities appear to approximate roughly ordinary human proportions, some are shown as considerably smaller, more like uncomfortably large rodents, and a very few are colossal giants that look to be anywhere from twenty to forty feet tall. Usually shown partaking in all sorts of ghoulish activities, they seem to represent our darkest and most suppressed urges — what Professor Freud describes as those of our "Id" — which I suppose would account for their unusual differences of scale. Some of our urges, after all, are minuscule, while some are stupefyingly immense. The odd thing, in all of these scenes of depraved and carnivorous monstrosity, is the infectious good-natured cheeriness of these terrible underground fiends. They

all seem to be having such a tremendously good time that I've found myself grinning or even chuckling at some of the most awful images that can be imagined. I suppose that this is more evidence for Ronnie's work being some kind of black social or political satire, making a serious point using dark comedy and grotesquery the way Gilray or Hogarth would have done in an earlier century. I know that I heard him mention a name he has for these comically awful beings — I think it was Sap-something, unless I'm still thinking of the Stella Sapiente.

That's another thing that Ronnie has been hugely helpful with. During his various dealings with the order over the years (apparently they trust his discretion, even if he's a little lowly-bred for their personal tastes) he's managed to gain a lot of useful insights into their philosophy and their techniques. The things he's told me have done a lot to reassure me about all the business that went on in Manchester, which according to Ronnie is most likely evidence that the Stella Sapiente have used some kind of hypnotic mind-distortion technique on me, making me forget whole weeks of things I've actually done, and making me think I've done things that I haven't, or that how I interpret it, anyway.

It's no use. I still can't find a way to talk about the thing that's really bothering me. Maybe I'll just have to let it go, or maybe I'll have thought up some other means of approaching the problem after another good night's sleep in Ronnie's spare room. I guess we'll see.

September 17th

Overnight I happened to have what I think is a really good idea, for a story. How about if it were possible for someone to forcibly exchange their mind with that of another person? By that, I mean that they could take over another person's body, while their victim's ousted intelligence would be imprisoned within the conjuror's own vacated form. I say conjuror because I suppose the only way that such a thing could really happen for story purposes is by some terrifying act of magic. Let's suppose that such an individual, who possessed this mind-and-body swapping trick, might have had their origins sometime in the remote past. Presumably, when their own body, the body they were born with, had naturally reached the end of its life, they would have the option of transferring their mind and personality to a younger, healthier body while imprisoning the original inhabitant of that body within the conjuror's own dying

flesh. In this way, our monstrous and evil magician might have been able to survive for generations, even centuries, by hopping from one body and one identity to another. Of course, this awful shape-stealing creature would not be limited in the choice of bodies which he could inhabit. He'd be able, as easily as putting on a new set of clothes, to don a body that was a completely different age, or race, or even gender. Purely for the purposes of our story, we could suppose that at the time it occurs, our mental parasite or cuckoo is inhabiting the body of a young woman. Then perhaps, I don't know, because the horror would prefer to be back in a male body, in its female guise it ensnares a young man, occupying his masculine form while imprisoning him within the vulnerable and helpless feminine body. I'm sure that I needn't go on, and that any normal individual could easily surmise the sort of appalling cruelties and perversities that might ensue from such a malignant transference. At the end of the story, I think it's important that this... thing... is finally killed, as a punishment for all the lives it has stolen or ruined. Perhaps some friend of the usurped young man could work out what was going on by some means, and then, in an act of understandable outrage and revenge, could track down the monster that is wearing his displaced friend's body and kill it, kill the filthy thing stone dead, firing bullet after bullet into its rotten heart before it had a chance to once more escape the fate that it had been avoiding for all these decades of other people's lives!

There. I don't know if that's a good story idea or not, but I certainly feel a lot better for having written it down.

September 20th

I have to say, this has been one of the most eventful Saturdays that I've had in a long time. Let me first explain that it's quite late at night and I'm writing this is my very agreeable room at Boston's Vendome Hotel, to which I checked in an hour or two ago after belatedly realising how much I'd been imposing on Ronnie Pitman's charitable nature. The day got off to a grand start with Ronnie taking me for a walk around North End while we talked about the tunnel system underlying the district, where the founding fathers allegedly plotted the American Revolution. As fascinating as all this was, it was when we got back to Ronnie's place that things took a very peculiar and revealing turn. Ronnie was showing me his paintings, and I think I impressed him with my insights into the political message they contained, while explaining more to me

about the Stella Sapiente's hypnotic techniques. From what I understood of it, the hypnotic trigger is somehow activated by the simple act of descending, in accordance with the Stella Sapiente's idea of our dream-world being literally buried and underground, a similar notion to Professor Jung's theories. Anyway, Ronnie told me that the basic principles of this technique, when put to a benign purpose, had helped him greatly in conceiving of his many startling and astonishing paintings, and furthermore offered to demonstrate this method to me. He said he thought it would help me understand what had been happening, which it certainly did.

After first thoughtfully wrapping me in a big heavy spare coat of his, he led me down into the voluminous cellar (and, I suppose, down into my subconscious mind), explaining that it would be possible for me to talk to some of the buried components of my own personality as if they were actually separate beings that were in the room with me. Obviously, I was intrigued, and after first instructing me to sit with my back to him at all times, presumably an equivalent of a regular hypnotist telling you to close your eyes, he proceeded with his hypnotic demonstration by summoning up what I assume was an expression of my submerged "Id", the same part of the human psychology that was also being expressed by the genial, fun-loving, flesh-eating creatures in Pitman's paintings.

The experience was absolutely extraordinary, and not a little overwhelming. It might be that Ronnie was augmenting his hypnotism with a little ventriloquism into the bargain, but the effect was unbelievable. For some several minutes, it was actually as if some enormous subterranean demon were sitting some feet behind me and patiently answering my questions, while also dealing with Ronnie Pitman's very real-sounding ventriloquist's interjections, which I assume were to add to the convincing reality of the illusion. This was hardly necessary however, with the hypnotic trance doing far too good a job of conjuring the unseen apparition's stomach-churning charnel stench. In a suitably cavernous voice, this inhabitant of my most deeply buried awareness was introduced to me as 'King George', which I suppose mockingly reflects the silly air of superiority that I'm sometimes prone to.

We talked for what seemed like ages about a lot of things that I imagine were deeply symbolic, and at one point there was the strangest thing: the creature, part of my own subconscious mind, told me that it was worried for me! No doubt on account of all the self-inflicted torments I've been putting myself through since losing Lillian, but it was still a sobering little exchange. After a while,

Ronnie concluded the trance by symbolically leading 'King George' back down into the buried recesses of my mind and personality, which I suppose was like a hypnotist counting down from ten in order to wake a subject up after the demonstration. He then led me back upstairs, where he confessed that even after that incredible display, he felt I needed somebody "more articulate", perhaps another writer, to explain all this heady material to me properly. I don't know whether he was sincere about this, or whether I'd just outstayed my welcome, but I decided to take the hint either way, and after saying my grateful goodbyes set out to visit the local author whose address Ronnie had given me.

This took me down to 58 F Street, which was almost at the other end of Boston, where I briefly met the author in question, a Mr. Randall Carver. Though obviously taken aback by my unannounced intrusion, I think Mr. Carver warmed to me when he realised my literary intentions were serious, and said that if I liked I could visit him next Monday morning, this being the 22nd, and we could discuss some of the things I wanted to talk about. He was also kind enough to recommend the Vendome as a place where I could stay in relative comfort until then, even though this meant a lengthy and enervating walk back the way I'd come. Apparently, as well as being an author, Carver is some sort of expert on dreams and dream-like states, so I'm looking forward eagerly to our encounter.

You know, it's taken me a long time, but I'm genuinely feeling better now. I'm feeling better about my whole illusory nightmare in Manchester, and even about my psychological state in general. Perhaps, after some sympathy from an imaginary horror buried in my deepest dreams, I'm finally starting to come to terms with what happened to Lily. Maybe things with me are at last taking a turn for the better? After all these upsets, I sure could use it if they were. Fingers crossed.

CHAPTER 8

"At 7:00 a party consisting of Miss H., her aunt, young Lee, and L. Theobold set out for the great event. Arriving early at the Copley-Plaza, we obtained front seats; so that during the address I sat directly opposite the speaker, not ten feet from him. Dunsany entered late, accompanied and introduced by Prof. George Baker of Harvard."

—To Reinhardt Kleiner
Nov 9th, 1919

"...SINCERELY HOPE MY CLOUD-CRAWLER MANUSCRIPT DIDN'T KEEP YOU AWAKE IN YOUR HOTEL ROOM ALL NIGHT, MR. BLACK.
"FUNNILY ENOUGH, WALLACE TILLINGHAST WHO PROVIDED THE IDEA IS A COUSIN OF HENRY ANNESLEY, ONE OF THAT STELLA SAPIENTE CROWD YOU'RE INVESTIGATING.
"1909, TILLINGHAST ANNOUNCED FLYING TO NEW YORK AND BACK IN A 'SECRET AEROPLANE'.
"THIS WAS SEPTEMBER, AFTER A LUMINOUS OBJECT WITH ACCOMPANYING MOTOR-LIKE GROWLS WAS REPORTED OVER NEW ENGLAND.
"TILLINGHAST'S YARN SEEMED AN OBVIOUS HOAX, SO WHEN AERIAL LIGHTS WERE SEEN ABOVE BOSTON AND HIS NATIVE WORCESTER JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS, HE WAS STILL DISBELIEVED.
"CRUCIALLY, HE WAS VISIBLY AT HOME DURING ONE SUCH SIGHTING.
"TO ME, HOWEVER, HE INSISTED HE HAD MADE THE FLIGHTS, ALBEIT IN A KIND OF MANIFESTED DREAM.
"USING TECHNIQUES LEARNED FROM HIS COUSIN, AND ESPECIALLY POTENT AROUND THE MIDWINTER FESTIVAL, HE'D ASTRALLY GUIDED AN INCANDESCENT MONSTER ACROSS THE HEAVENS.
"HOGWASH OR NOT, TILLINGHAST'S MARVELLOUSLY WEIRD NOTION SPARKED MY 'CRAWLER FROM THE CLOUDS' STORY..."
...SO I SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY ALL OF MY TALES ARE INSPIRED BY DREAMS AND DELUSIONS, EVEN IF THEY'RE SOMETIMES THOSE OF SOMEONE ELSE.
HA HA! RANDALL, I'VE JUST REALISED: YOU'RE A GENUINE MASSACHUSETTS DECADENT.
SO TELL ME, WOULD YOU SAY THAT DREAMS ARE ESSENTIAL TO UNLOCKING THE STELLA SAPIENTE'S WHOLE PHILOSOPHY?

OH, I'M QUITE CERTAIN.
DREAMS, WRITINGS, AND OUR OUTLANDISH HUMAN *IMAGININGS*...
THEY'RE AT THE VERY *HEART* OF IT.
VIII: THE KEY

HUH. WELL, I SUPPOSE WRITINGS HAVE CERTAINLY GUIDED ME, WHAT WITH SOUS LE MONDE, CHAMBERS' KING IN YELLOW AND HALI'S BOOKE.
AND THEN THERE'S THIS AMATEUR PUBLICATION YOU LOANED ME. I DIDN'T KNOW THINGS LIKE THIS EXISTED. ONE OF THE SHORT STORIES WAS ASTONISHING...
LET ME GUESS...
WAS IT 'BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP'?
PINE CONES
AH, SO YOU NOTICED IT, TOO? IT HAD ME HOOKED FROM THE FIRST SENTENCE...
THAT BIT ABOUT "THE OCCASIONALLY TITANIC SIGNIFICANCE OF DREAMS, AND OF THE OBSCURE WORLD TO WHICH THEY BELONG."
PERSONALLY, I RATHER ENJOYED THE REFERENCES TO ASTRONOMY, LIKE ALGOL.
AUTHOR HAD A UNUSUAL NAME, I RECALL. WAS IT LOVELADY?
NO, 'CRAFT'. H. P. LOVECRAFT. HE DOESN'T HAVE YOUR LITERARY SKILLS, BUT HIS IDEAS ARE POWERFUL.
RANDALL, ARE THERE MANY OF THESE LITTLE MAGAZINES LIKE PINE CONES AROUND?
WELL, THEY'RE WHERE MOST OF MY OWN CONFECTIONS HAVE SEEN PRINT.
BELIEVE ME, THESE FLIMSY PAMPHLETS CAN OFFER GREAT CONSOLATION DURING AN OTHERWISE UNACCOMPLISHED CAREER.
UNACCOMPLISHED? RANDALL, AFTER THESE WEEKS I'VE BEEN VISITING YOU, THAT ISN'T MY IMPRESSION.
IF I'D HAD YOUR EXPERIENCES, OR WRITTEN THE STORIES THAT YOU HAVE...
...THEN YOU'D BE A JADED POSEUR OF FORTY-SIX, MUCH LIKE MYSELF.
I'VE HARDLY LED AN EVENTFUL LIFE. INDEED, MOST OF MY EXPLOITS HAVE BEEN WHOLLY IMAGINARY...

WELL, MAYBE YOUR FICTIONS AND YOUR WORK WITH DREAMS, BUT I'M TALKING ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY...
THAT'S THE MOST OVER-EMBROIDERED FANTASY OF THEM ALL.
BORN OF GENTEEL STOCK HERE IN BOSTON, 'PAUVRE EDDIE' POE'S BIRTHPLACE, I SUPPOSE IT'S TO BE EXPECTED.
ORPHANED EARLY, I WAS RAISED OUTSIDE MANCHESTER, WHICH I BELIEVE YOU VISITED...
UH... Y-YES, I DID. MY MEMORIES OF THE PLACE MAY BE LESS IDYLLIC THAN YOURS...
VERY POSSIBLY.
GROWING UP ON THAT FARM WITH MY AUNT, MY UNCLE AND THEIR SPLENDID OLD MANSERVANT ELIJAH WAS PERHAPS THE LAST TIME I WAS TRULY CONTENTED.
SMALL WONDER IT'S THE MOST UNATTAINABLE OF MY MANY DREAMLANDS.
WERE YOUR DREAM-EXPERIMENTS A CONSOLATION, THEN, FOR A VANISHED CHILDHOOD?
I SUPPOSE THEY WERE.
THEY COMMENCED WHEN I RETURNED TO BOSTON AFTER GRADUATION, SUSTAINED BY MY INHERITANCE. THIS WAS IN THE YELLOW NINETIES, WHEN ANYTHING SEEMED POSSIBLE.
THEIR CULMINATION, IN 1898, WAS A PROTRACTED DREAM-EXCURSION THROUGH WHAT SEEMED A CONSISTENT GEOGRAPHY...
HOW DO YOU MEAN?
I MEAN MY DREAM-WORLD WAS A VERITABLE CONTINENT, WITH MOUNTAINS, CITIES AND FABULOUS DENIZENS.
AFTER THAT, MY ABILITIES FADED. BY YOUR AGE I COULD NO LONGER REACH THOSE FURTHER ETHEREAL TERRITORIES.
I FLIRTED INSTEAD WITH RELIGION AND VARIOUS LITERARY POSTURES BEFORE RESORTING TO THEN-FASHIONABLE OCCULTISM.

WAS THIS WHEN YOU LEARNED OF THE STELLA SAPIENTE AND SAW HALI'S BOOK?
YES... ALTHOUGH ONLY HAVING VIEWED THE *CYPHER-PAGES* YOU MENTIONED, I DIDN'T KNOW ITS *TITLE*.
MY ASSOCIATE HARVEY WARNER, WHO OWNED IT, KNEW OF THE STELLA SAPIENTE.
IT VANISHED WITH HIM IN THAT FLORIDA *CEMETERY* INCIDENT I TOLD YOU ABOUT...
MY GOD, YES, WITH THE RADIO TELEPHONE AND THE VOICE SAYING HE WAS DEAD. SURELY YOU CAN'T BELIEVE *THAT* WAS IMAGINARY?
WELL, WITH NO EVIDENCE, IT SEEMS VERY *DREAM-LIKE*. SOME TRANCE-STATE, POSSIBLY, AS WITH THE EXPERIENCES *YOU* HINTED AT.
WITH HINDSIGHT, BOTH MY OCCULT ADVENTURES MAY HAVE BEEN MERE *HALLUCINATIONS*.
BOTH? WHAT WAS THE OTHER ONE?
OH, THAT OCCURRED WHILST REVISITING *MANCHESTER* WITH A *TEACHER* FRIEND OF MINE.
FUNNILY ENOUGH, IT WAS IN ANOTHER *CEMETERY*. HE WAS DECRYING MY TENDENCY TO WRITE OF 'INDESCRIBABLE' HORRORS.
THEN... SOMETHING HAPPENED, WHICH I DON'T RECALL AND WHICH HE, IRONICALLY, COULD NOT DESCRIBE. HE LATER COMMITTED SUICIDE.
THAT... THAT'S *TERRIBLE*. A FRIEND OF MINE DID THE SAME THING...
MY CONDOLENCES, THOUGH I DOUBT YOU SUFFERED MY *GUILT*. I'D KNOWN FROM FAMILY DOCUMENTS THE PLACE WAS *DANGEROUS*.
THAT ENDED MY DIABOLISM. NEXT I EMBRACED *DECADENCE*, WITH DIFFERENT COLORED ROOMS TO SUIT MY MOODS...
...APING POE IN *DECOR* AS IN *BIRTHPLACE*.

UM... WELL, YOUR HOUSE HERE ON F STREET IS BEAUTIFUL, BUT IT'S HARDLY PRINCE PROSPERO'S PALACE...
NO. DESPITE PREFERRING ART TO BLIND NATURE, I WEARIED OF THE DECADENT LOVE FOR ARTIFICE.
FAVOURING TRADITION INSTEAD, I REINTRODUCED THE VICTORIAN FITTINGS OF MY INFANCY.
ANTIQUITY OBSESSED ME. IT EVEN COLORED MY INFREQUENT DREAMS...
IN WHAT WAY?
WELL, IT'S SOMETHING WHICH HAD OFTEN PUZZLED ME ABOUT THE OTHERWISE STABLE DREAM-COUNTRY THAT I MENTIONED.
CHARACTER-ISTICALLY, IT SEEMED ANOTHER WORLD ALTOGETHER FROM OUR OWN, THOUGH SOMETIMES IT APPEARED AN EARTHLY PLACE THAT HAD PRECEDED OUR EARLIEST CIVILIZATIONS.
THIS DISCREPANCY MADE ME RECONSIDER SUCH STELLA SAPIENTE THEORIES AS I'D ABSORBED FROM POOR, DISAPPEARED WARNER.
WERE THESE THE CONCEPTS MR. PITMAN DESCRIBED, WITH THE DREAM-WORLD LITERALLY UNDERGROUND?
WELL, THOUGH I MYSELF APPROACH DREAMS BY THE SEVEN HUNDRED STEPS TO DEEPER SLUMBER, IT WAS ANOTHER ASPECT WHICH FASCINATED ME.
WARNER HAD MENTIONED A STELLA SAPIENTE HEAD AND PROMINENT FREEMASON WHO MET WITH GENERAL ALBERT PIKE IN 1863.
ALBERT PIKE... WASN'T HE A FREEMASON, TOO?
APPARENTLY SO. WARNER SAID PIKE AND THE STELLA SAPIENTE REPRESENTATIVE DISCUSSED THE DREAM-WORLD.
ACCORDING TO WARNER, THEY'D VIEWED IT AS PHYSICALLY EXISTING IN EARTH'S REMOTE PAST, SUPPLANTED BY OUR WORLD BUT CAPABLE OF FUTURE RESURRECTION.
NATURALLY, I'VE PLUNDERED THIS IDEA SHAMELESSLY IN MY OWN STORIES...

WHICH ONES? SURELY NOT 'CRAWLER FROM THE CLOUDS'?
WELL, EVEN THAT CONCERNED DREAMS BECOMING MATERIAL... BUT I'M THINKING MORE OF OFFERINGS LIKE 'TWILIGHT ODYSSEY'.
IN IT, AN EXPLORER DISCOVERS A REGION OF THE CONGO WHERE THE PRE-HUMAN DREAM-WORLD STILL PERSISTS.
MUCH INFLUENCED BY LORD DUNSANY'S 'IDLE DAYS ON THE YANN', OBVIOUSLY.
ISN'T THAT THE WRITER WE'RE GOING TO HEAR SPEAK TONIGHT? I'VE NEVER READ HIS WORK...
OH, YOU MUST. HE CRAFTS THE MOST EXQUISITE METAPHORS.
MORE THAN THAT, HE'S ADMIRABLE AS A MAN: A TITLED ARISTOCRAT, A BIG GAME HUNTER, A SOLDIER...
DUNSANY'S BRAVERY PROMPTED ME TO ENLIST IN THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION.
YOU FOUGHT IN THE WAR?
I... UH... I WAS TURNED DOWN FOR, UH, FOR MEDICAL REASONS.
NO SHAME IN THAT. I MYSELF SAW LITTLE COMBAT, BUT THE EXPERIENCE WAS TERRIFYING.
TO BE HONEST, IT'S LEFT ME ALMOST UNABLE TO WRITE INCONSEQUENTIAL YARNS OF MERE HORROR, AND EVEN RELUCTANT TO EXPLORE MY DREAMS.
I UNDERSTAND. CAN I STILL ASK ABOUT YOUR METHODS? DOES YOUR 'SEVEN HUNDRED STEPS' TECHNIQUE INVOLVE LITERALLY DESCENDING, LIKE I TRIED WITH MR. PITMAN?
NOT REALLY... IN FACT, YOUR ACCOUNT RATHER PUZZLED ME.
MY METHOD IS PURELY CEREBRAL. I CAN DEMONSTRATE, IF YOU WISH.
EYES CLOSED, WE IMAGINE OURSELVES ATOP AN ENORMOUS STAIRCASE...

WELL, I GUESS THAT'S EASY ENOUGH. SO THIS IS YOUR DREAM-PROCEDURE?
OH, THERE'S MUCH MORE TO SUCCESSFUL DREAMING. RIGOROUSLY KEEPING DREAM-JOURNALS, FOR INSTANCE, TRAINS US TO REMEMBER MORE OF OUR NIGHTLY PERAMBULATIONS.
THE SEVEN HUNDRED STEPS ARE SIMPLY A MEANS OF INDUCING THE LUCID DREAM STATE, WHERE WE ARE FULLY CONSCIOUS DESPITE BEING ASLEEP.
WE DESCEND THE STEPS INTO DREAM. COUNTING THEM SERVES TO KEEP OUR ATTENTION FOCUSSED.
YES. YES, I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN. IT'S QUITE AN EFFORT, ISN'T IT, SUSTAINING VISUALIZING THE STEPS WITHOUT GETTING DISTRACTED. FIFTEEN, SIXTEEN...
LIKE ANY DISCIPLINE, IT BECOMES EASIER WITH PRACTICE. I FIND IT HELPS TO ENGAGE ALL OF OUR IMAGINARY SENSES.
BE AWARE OF THE STAIRWAY'S CAVE-LIKE ACOUSTICS, ITS SUBTLE ODOR OF WET STONE, AND THE UNEVEN TEXTURE OF ROUGH-HEWN TREADS BENEATH OUR FEET.
THIRTY, THIRTY-ONE...
THIS IS UNUSUAL... I SEEM TO BE GETTING VERY SHARP VISUAL IMPRESSIONS OF SUBTERRANEAN LAYERS.
I'M ALSO FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO STOP THE STAIRCASE CHANGING SHAPE...
THAT'S UNAVOIDABLE AS WE APPROACH STRATA WHERE IDEAS ARE LESS FIXED. THERE ARE, YOU SEE, MANY LEVELS TO SLUMBER.
AT OUR PRESENT DEPTH THE DROWSY HYPNAGOGIC STATE COMMENCES, WITH ITS PROLIFERATION OF EXOTIC SHIFTING IMAGERY. ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY NINE. ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY...

Y-YES. AND THEN THAT IMAGERY STARTS TALKING TO YOU. RANDALL, IS YOUR WHOLE DREAM-REALM UNDERGROUND? ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY. ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-ONE...
HELLO. HELLO, ROBERT. I AM HAPPY TO SMELL YOU.
CARVER, YOU DAMNED COWARD! DON'T PRETEND YOU CAN'T HEAR US!
I SUPPOSE IT MUST BE, RATHER LIKE ALICE'S WONDERLAND. AS FOR THE VOICES, IGNORE THEM. ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY THREE. ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY FOUR...
NNN...
NOW... NOW ALL THE COLORS... GETTING BRIGHTER. FIVE HUNNERD FORTY SEVEN. FIVE HUNNERD FORTY EIGHT...
I'SS... I'SS UN INDI... INDICASHUN WE'RE ALMOS' THERE.
FIVE HUNNUD UN FIFFY-THREE. FIVE HUNNUD UN FIFFY-FOUR...
THIS IS EXTRAORDINARY. ALL THESE WEEKS I'VE STAYED AT THE VENDOME AND VISITED YOU, I'VE MISUNDERSTOOD WHAT YOU MEANT BY DREAMING.
EVERYTHING FEELS ABSOLUTELY REAL, LIKE MY EXPERIENCE AT RONALD PITMAN'S PLACE. SIX HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIX. SIX HUNDRED AND NINETY-SEVEN...
THE LUCID STATE DIFFERS FROM REALITY ONLY IN ITS MALEABILITY.
SIX HUNDRED AND NINETY-NINE, SEVEN HUNDRED. THERE. NOW, LET US EXPLORE THESE CLOSER REACHES OF HYPNOS'S PRECINCT.

THIS IS SO VIVID. HOW CAN YOU THINK YOU'RE LOSING YOUR ABILITIES AS A DREAMER?
OH, THESE ARE ONLY THE UPPER DREAMLANDS, WHERE RECENT WAKING MEMORIES ARE TO BE FOUND. ONCE, I COULD VENTURE FURTHER.
THE TABLEAU AHEAD, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD SEEM TO BE DERIVED FROM ELEMENTS OF OUR FORGOING CONVERSATION...
SIR, WITH MY KNIGHTS OF THE GOLDEN CIRCLE TO PERPETUATE OUR MUTUAL VALUES, IT IS MY FONDEST WISH FOR THAT PROUD LAND TO RISE AGAIN.
THIS IS PRESUMABLY GENERAL PIKE AND THE STELLA SAPIENTE FELLOW, AS WE WERE LATELY DISCUSSING...
I TAKE IT, SIR, THAT YOU ARE REFERRING TO YOUR BELOVED SOUTH?
NO, SIR.
I MOST ASSUREDLY AM NOT.
I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND. DID THE MEETING REALLY HAPPEN THAT WAY? AND WEREN'T THOSE HOODED FIGURES KLANSMEN?
THEY CERTAINLY APPEARED TO BE, ALTHOUGH APPEARANCES HERE CAN BE SYMBOLIC AS OFTEN AS THEY ARE ACTUAL.
IN EITHER CASE, THE SCENE PERTAINS ONLY TO EARTHLY MATTERS. IF WE DESIRE THE UNEARTHLY WE MUST VENTURE EVER ONWARDS...

I-I THINK I'VE SEEN THE STELLA SAPIENTE MAN BEFORE, IN ONE OF PITMAN'S PHOTOGRAPHS. I THINK HIS NAME'S BUREN OR VAN BUREN...
YOU MAY BE RIGHT. THE ONLY MEMBER I'M REMOTELY FAMILIAR WITH IS LITTLE HENRY ANNESLEY.
I HOPE YOU'RE MAINTAINING YOUR CONCENTRATION, INCIDENTALLY. WE'RE NOW APPROACHING THE RAGGED OUTSKIRTS OF DREAM.
QUITE HOW THESE RUSTING CARRIAGES PERTAIN TO CARNAL LONGINGS FOR OUR MOTHERS IS UNCLEAR, ALTHOUGH PRESUMABLY PROFESSOR FREUD WOULD HAVE IT OTHERWISE.
I'M JUST AMAZED BY THE CLARITY AND STABILITY OF IT ALL.
EXACTLY AS YOU SAID, IT'S A COHERENT COUNTRY WITH ITS OWN CONSISTENT GEOGRAPHY, ITS OWN PLANT-LIFE AND ITS OWN...
...UH...
R-RANDALL? D-DID YOU SEE, BACK THERE? THERE WAS SOME... SOME KIND OF...
YES, I NOTICED.
THINGS LIKE THAT AREN'T UNCOMMON HERE. THAT'S WHAT MAKES THE STELLA SAPIENTE NOTION OF THIS REALITY ONE DAY ENGULFING OUR OWN SO POTENTIALLY ALARMING.
THE FAUNA HERE IS FRIGHTFULLY DIVERSE, AND BECOMES MORE PROLIFIC THE FURTHER WE TRAVEL...

THERE ARE SOME SPECIES INDIGENOUS TO THESE PARTS THAT WE SHOULD NOT CARE TO HAVE LOITERING ON OUR NEW ENGLAND CORNERS.
FORTUNATELY, I SUSPECT THE STELLA SAPIENTE VISION TO BE A COLLECTIVE FANTASY, MUCH LIKE THEIR 'REDEEMER' NONSENSE.
I GUESS IT DOES SOUND SORT OF CRAZY.
IS THIS A CEMETERY UP AHEAD?
YES... SUCH PLACES TEND TO DOMINATE MY INNER LANDSCAPE, AS YOU MAY HAVE GATHERED.
THEY ALSO PROVIDE A CONVENIENT HABITAT FOR THESE RATHER AMIABLE CORPSE-EATERS...
UM. TH-THEY'RE EXACTLY LIKE THE THINGS PITMAN PAINTS. HE OBVIOUSLY TRAVELS HERE AS WELL.
SO YOU'RE CONFIDENT THE STELLA SAPIENTE'S REDEEMER IS ONLY WISHFUL THINKING?
REASONABLY SO. AND EVEN SHOULD SUCH A PERSON EXIST, HE IS APPARENTLY USELESS UNLESS CONTACTED BY AN EQUALLY UNLIKELY 'MESSENGER'.
WHILE SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE UNDOUBTEDLY CATASTROPHIC, IT SEEMS IMPROBABLE; CERTAINLY IN OUR LIFETIMES.
THAT'S A REASSURING THOUGHT.
WHAT'S THIS TOWER? IT SEEMS TO REACH ALL THE WAY TO THE SKY...
THE GRAVE-GRAZERS USE IT TO ACCESS OUR REALM'S LOWER REACHES... THOUGH I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE THAT'S SKY UP THERE.
IT'S THE SUBTERRANEAN ASPECT YOU MENTIONED: THOSE OCCASIONAL TWINKLES COULD AS WELL BE STALACTITES AS STARS...
SO... SO THE DREAM-WORLD IS IN SOME WAY LITERALLY UNDERGROUND? BUT HOW IS THAT PHYSICALLY POSSIBLE?

TO BE HONEST, I'M NOT SURE IT *IS.*
THE VERY NOTION IMPLIES THAT REALITY MIGHT BE IN A DIFFERENT *STATE* WHERE IT IS *UNOBSERVED;* ALTHOUGH THAT CONTRADICTS ALL WE KNOW OF *SCIENCE.*
YES. AND THERE'S THAT *MOON* TO CONSIDER.
RANDALL? WH-WHERE ARE ALL OF THESE *CATS* COMING FROM? SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED?
NOT AT ALL. THIS DAINTY CREW KNOW ME OF OLD AND CALL ME FRIEND, AS ALL THEIR *ENEMIES* ARE LONG SINCE DEAD AND *EATEN.*
IT'S NOT UNKNOWN FOR THEM TO LEND THEIR SLEEK ASSISTANCE TO A DREAMER'S *TRAVELS.*
B-BUT THEY'RE RISING AROUND OUR *WAISTS.* I-IT ALMOST FEELS AS IF THEY'RE GOING TO...
OHH!
MY WORD! THEY CERTAINLY HAVEN'T EXTENDED ME *THIS* COURTESY IN A WHILE. YOUR PRESENCE WOULD SEEM TO HAVE *ENTHUSED* THEM.
THEY'RE... THEY'RE CARRYING US TOWARDS THE *MOON.* RANDALL, THIS IS *WONDERFUL!*
DO YOU THINK YOUR DREAM-ABILITIES ARE *RETURNING?* MAYBE THERE'S NOTHING PREVENTING YOU FROM JOURNEYING AS FAR AS YOU ONCE DID...
HMM.
LET'S WAIT AND SEE, SHALL WE?

AA! AAAAA!
DASH IT ALL! I KNEW SOMETHING LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN!
HAVE NO FEAR, MR. BLACK! BEING FAMILIAR WITH THESE FACELESS, FLAPPING THINGS, I DO NOT THINK THEY MEAN US HARM...
OH, GOD! OH GOD, WHAT ARE THEY?
R-RANDALL, THEY'RE... EEUGH... THEY'RE TICKLING ME!
Y-YES. IT'S ONE OF THE MORE DISQUIETING ASPECTS OF THEIR BEHAVIOUR. IT CAN FEEL UNPLEASANTLY SEXUAL IN ITS NATURE.
WHEN THESE CREPUSCULAR SERAPHS HAVE PREVIOUSLY CARRIED ME BACK TO WAKEFULNESS, I'VE SOMETIMES FOUND MYSELF IN AN UNWANTED STATE OF ANIMAL AROUSAL.
UGGH. OH, GOD, YOU'RE RIGHT. THIS IS HORRIBLE!
RANDALL, I CAN'T STAND IT! PLEASE MAKE THEM STOP...
NO! ROBERT, DON'T WRIGGLE! YOU'LL MAKE THEM DROP US AND WE'LL...

...FALL...
AAAA!
WE'RE FALLING THE WRONG WAY! WE'RE FALLING UP INTO THE SKY...
THAT MUSTN'T HAPPEN! THAT'S WHERE THE OUTER ENTITIES RESIDE...
REMEMBER, AS I DID ONCE, THAT THIS IS BUT A DREAM, AND THAT TO ESCAPE IT WE NEED ONLY OPEN WIDE OUR...
...EYES.

HOLY SMOKE! RANDALL, THAT WAS UNBELIEVABLE.
IF YOUR DREAMS CAN BE LIKE THAT, NO WONDER THEY'VE INSPIRED SO MUCH OF YOUR FICTION.
AH, BUT IT WAS LORD DUNSANY'S FICTION WHICH FIRST PROVOKED ME TO DREAM.
SPEAKING OF WHOM, IF WE ARE NOT TO MISS THIS EVENING'S ADDRESS, WE MUST SET FORTH AT ONCE.
...LOOKING FORWARD TO IT. IT SOUNDS LIKE HIS WRITINGS HAVE TAUGHT YOU A LOT.
ALSO, WITH THE COPLEY PLAZA SO NEAR THE VENDOME, IT'S NO INCONVENIENCE.
MOST FORTUITOUS. YES, DUNSANY'S WORK TEACHES SUBTLETY, CONCEALING MOMENTOUS EVENTS IN OTHERWISE QUIET PASSAGES. FOR EXAMPLE...
MY GOD, BLACK? WHAT'S THIS ABOUT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
UH... DR. NORTH? I-IS SOMETHING WRONG?
THAT'S WHAT I SHOULD BE ASKING YOU! WHY HAVE YOU FOLLOWED US TO BOSTON?
ARE YOU TRYING TO LEAD THEM TO US, IS THAT IT? SCRATCHING IN THE EARTH...
HECTOR, FOR GOD'S SAKE, IT'S CLEARLY COINCIDENCE. STOP BEING SO DRAMATIC AND LET'S GET YOU HOME...

WHAT A PECULIAR PAIR. I TAKE IT THEY'RE FRIENDS OF YOURS?
WELL... MORE ACQUAINTANCES, REALLY. I STAYED WITH THEM BRIEFLY IN MANCHESTER, BUT THEN THEY HAD TO LEAVE TOWN IN RATHER A HURRY.
ALL THESE WEEKS WITH MR. PITMAN AND YOURSELF, I'D FORGOTTEN BOSTON WAS WHERE THEY WERE HEADED.
OH, WELL. LET'S CONTINUE...
AND HERE WE ARE IN COPLEY SQUARE.
I MUST SAY, YOU'VE CHOSEN A DISAGREEABLY EVENTFUL YEAR TO VISIT OUR FAIR CITY.
WELL, ARRIVING ON THE WORST NIGHT OF THE POLICE STRIKE RIOTS WAS RATHER A SHOCK, BUT OTHERWISE I'VE ENJOYED IT.
WILL GUARDSMEN PATROL BOSTON'S STREETS FOR LONG, DO YOU SUPPOSE?
IT'S DIFFICULT TO SAY. UNTIL A NEW POLICE FORCE UNTAINTED BY BOLSHEVISM CAN BE RECRUITED, I'D IMAGINE.
HMM. HARDLY AS SPLENDIDLY ANTIQUE AS YOUR VENDOME, BUT STILL AN EXCEPTIONAL HOTEL TO JUDGE BY ITS LOBBY.
IT CERTAINLY IS. NOW, IF ONLY WE CAN LOCATE THE BALLROOM BEFORE DUNSANY'S TALK STARTS, WE'LL BE FINE...
...AND SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE OUR ILLUSTRIOUS GUEST.
FELLOW BOSTONIANS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MAY I PRESENT EDWARD JOHN MORETON DRAX PLUNKETT, THE EIGHTEENTH BARON DUNSANY.
WELL, THANK YOU, PROFESSOR BAKER. YOU'RE FAR TOO KIND...

FOR MY PART, I'M DELIGHTED TO FREQUENT YOUR CHARMING CITY, AND HOPE BOSTON WILL NOT BE DISMAYED BY AN EMBITTERED VETERAN SUCH AS I.
HA HA HA HA...
GREAT HEAVENS, CARVER, HE'S LIKE SOMETHING FROM ONE OF YOUR OWN FANTASTICAL CONCOCTIONS. THE MAN'S A *GIANT*.
OH, IN ALMOST EVERY SENSE.
IN FACT, YOU'RE SPOILED FOR LITERARY HEROES TONIGHT. I BELIEVE THE GENTLEMAN NEXT TO THAT OLDER LADY IS YOUNG LOVECRAFT, WHOSE STORY YOU ENJOYED.
REALLY?
BUT RATHER THAN VISIT ON YOU THE MELANCHOLIES OF WAR THAT OF LATE SO COLOUR *MY* PERSPECTIVE, I HAVE A CHEERIER INTENTION...
IF I MAY, I WOULD PREFER TO SPEAK OF THAT ENDURING BASTION IMPERMEABLE TO TIME, OR CONFLICT, OR VICISSITUDE.
I WOULD PREFER TO SPEAK OF *BEAUTY*.
BEAUTY, WHETHER THAT OF NATURE OR OF ARTIFICE, POSSESSES WORTH WHICH TOUCHES THE *ETERNAL*.
HOW MAY AN AUTHOR, THEN, OF FLEETING MORTAL SPAN, PRESUME TO SUCH A CONDITION?

FORTUNATELY, WE HAVE THAT WITHIN US WHICH IS TIMELESS, AND UNBOUNDED BY A BAYONET-SCARRED WORLD, THIS BEING OUR *IMAGINATION.*
HERE ARE SUBTERRANEAN GEMS MORE LUSTROUS THAN SUNSETS, FOR THOSE WHO MOST DILIGENTLY MINE THE SEAM.
SIMILARLY, THERE ARE UNPREPOSSESSING DIVOTS LIKE THE PIECE I AM ABOUT TO READ...
HA HA HA.
ISN'T HE ***MARVELLOUS?*** I JUST LOVE THE WAY HE TALKS, WITH 'PREFAIR' INSTEAD OF 'PREFER'. IS THAT A BRITISH ACCENT?
THIS, YOU'LL BE RELIEVED TO HEAR, IS ONE OF THE BRIEFEST OF MY *PLAYS OF GODS AND MEN...*
THAT RATHER DEPENDS WHOM YOU ***ASK.*** I THINK ONE MIGHT SAFELY CALL IT A ***BROGUE.***
LACKING THE GREAT ADVANTAGES OF BROADWAY, YOU MUST SUFFER ME IN EVERY ROLE, INCLUDING THOSE MOST USUALLY PERFORMED BY LADIES.
GLEANED FROM HISTORY OR FABLE, MY ACCOUNT CONCERNS A MONARCH UNABLE TO BEAR EVEN THE ***THOUGHT*** OF FOES.
COMMENCING IN A TEMPLE, UNDERGROUND IN SIXTH-DYNASTY EGYPT, IT IS TITLED 'THE QUEEN'S ENEMIES'.
THE CURTAIN RISES ON DARKNESS, WHERE TWO SLAVES, THARNI AND THARRABAS, LIGHT WALL MOUNTED TORCHES WITH A TAPER.
IS IT MUCH FURTHER, THARNI?
I THINK NOT, THARRABAS.
A DANK AND TERRIBLE PLACE...
PLAYS

ZOPHÉRNES: [RISING] WE HAVE EATEN YOUR FRUITS AND DRUNK YOUR WINE; AND WE HAVE ASKED YOUR PARDON. LET US NOW DEPART IN AMITY.
QUEEN: NO, NO! YOU MUST NOT GO! I SHALL SAY... "THEY ARE MY ENEMIES STILL," AND I SHALL NOT SLEEP!
I THAT CANNOT BEAR TO HAVE ENEMIES...
ZOPHÉRNES: TO THE DOOR, SLAVES. LET NO MAN ENTER.
1ST DUKE OF ETHIOPIA: SHE CANNOT MEAN TO HARM US...
[SHE GOES TO THE DOOR. SILENCE FALLS. ALL WATCH HER. SHE AND ACKAZÁRPSES SLIP OUT.
[FOR A MOMENT SILENCE. THEN ALL DRAW THEIR WIDE SWORDS AND LAY THEM BEFORE THEM ON THE TABLE.]
...HAS BEEN NO SUCH SACRIFICE. COME DOWN, O NILE, FROM THE SUNLIGHT. O ANCIENT EGYPTIAN RIVER! THE SACRIFICE IS READY. O NILE, HEAR ME.
DUKE OF ETHIOPIA: NO ONE COMES.
QUEEN: [BEATS AGAIN WITH HER FAN] HARLEE, HARLEE, LET IN THE WATER UPON THE PRINCES AND GENTLEMEN...
[A TORRENT DESCENDS FROM THE GREAT HOLE. THE TEMPLE IS FLOODED.
[THE WATER FROM UNDER THE DOOR RISES UP THE STEPS. THE TORCHES HISS OUT ONE BY ONE.
[THE WATER, FINDING ITS LEVEL, JUST TOUCHES THE END OF THE QUEEN'S SKIRT AND STOPS.
[SHE WITHDRAWS THE SKIRT WITH CATLIKE HASTE FROM THE WATER.]

QUEEN: O ACKAZÁRPSES! ARE ALL MY ENEMIES GONE? ACKAZÁRPSES: ILLUSTRIOUS LADY, THE NILE HAS TAKEN THEM ALL.
QUEEN: [WITH INTENSE DEVOTION] THAT HOLY RIVER. ACKAZÁRPSES: ILLUSTRIOUS LADY, WILL YOU SLEEP TONIGHT?
QUEEN: YES. I SHALL SLEEP SWEETLY. [CURTAIN]
THANK YOU. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. MY GOODNESS, WHAT AN APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE. THANK YOU...
WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK? HAVE WE MADE A *CONVERT* OF YOU?
YOU SURE *HAVE!* I COULD LISTEN TO HIM ALL NIGHT...
NO, PLEASE, YOU'RE TOO KIND. YOU WON'T THINK SO WELL OF ME AFTER THIS NEXT TRIFLE.
UNDERLINING MY MANY FLAWS, IT ASKS 'WHY THE MILKMAN SHUDDERS WHEN HE PERCEIVES THE DAWN'...
...WHEN EACH MILKMAN'S FACE LOOKS FEARFUL TO HIS FELLOW, YOU WOULD KNOW, AS NOW YOU *CANNOT*, WHY THE MILKMAN *SHUDDERS* WHEN HE PERCEIVES THE DAWN.
I THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE. IF ANY OF YOU POSSESS BOOKS THAT I MAY SULLY WITH MY SIGNATURE, PLEASE BRING THEM FORWARD...
HA HA HA! BRAVO!
ENCORE!
...HAVEN'T SEEN THIS EDITION IN SOME TIME. THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING.
NO, THANK *YOU*. THAT WAS JUST ENCHANTING...
...SILLY, ALICE! IF YOU WANT YOUR *BOOK* SIGNED, YOU BETTER GET UP THERE AND *ASK* HIM!
OH, AUNT, DO YOU THINK I *DARE?* HE'S SUCH A VERY IMPOSING FIGURE THAT I ALMOST FEEL...

BLACK, MY GOOD MAN, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME A MOMENT I SHALL ENDEAVOUR TO LOCATE A *WATER-CLOSET.*
THE READING WAS RATHER *LENGTHY* FOR A CHAP MY AGE. MAY I DEPEND ON YOU TO AWAIT MY RETURN?
NOW, WOULD THAT BE SARAH WITH THE AITCH, OR WITHOUT?
UH... SURE. I'LL BE RIGHT HERE.
...WHY COUSIN ALICE LETS MY MOTHER BOSS HER AROUND.
SO, ARE YOU AND HER STEPPIN' *OUT?*
WELL, NOW, I SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF ALL OF AMATEURDOM THOUGHT IT SO, YOUNG LEE. NOT ONE BIT!
THE ESTIMABLE MISS HAMLET, HOWEVER, IS A SOURCE OF *INTELLECTUAL* RATHER THAN *AMATORY* ENTHUSIASM, I ASSURE YOU.
YEAH. GUESS *I* DON'T COTTON MUCH TO GIRLS, NEITHER.
LISTEN, I WAS GONNA GO OVER WITH MOTHER AND ALICE, TO SEE THE WRITER FELLER. HOW ABOUT YOU?
NO. NO, I BELIEVE I SHALL REMAIN HERE AND BASK IN HIS LORDSHIP'S UNDOUBTED RADIANCE FROM A DISCREET *REMOVE.*
BUT DON'T MIND ME. YOU RUN ALONG...
UH... I, UH, I SEE YOU'RE NOT RUSHING TO JOIN THE *AUTOGRAPH-HOUNDS...*
MM?
OH... NO, I'M AFRAID I DON'T APPROVE OF FAWNING UPON THOSE THAT ONE *ADMIRES.*
WHY, NOBLE DUNSANY'S 'FAME AND THE POET' IN AUGUST'S *ATLANTIC* MAKES HIS OWN DISDAIN FOR THOSE THAT FLATTER THEIR LITERARY IDOLS PLAINLY *EVIDENT.*

UM... YES. YES, OF COURSE. TH-THAT'S VERY TRUE.
PLEASE FORGIVE ME. I-I'M FEELING LIKE SOMETHING OF A FOOL RIGHT THIS MINUTE...
WHATEVER FOR? IF YOU YOURSELF WERE SEEKING HIS SIGNATURE, THEN KNOW I INTENDED NO PERSONAL CRITICISM.
SIR, I AM AN ELDERLY AND BLUNDERING CURMUDGEON. PLEASE DON'T THINK OUR CONVERSATION OF ANY CONSEQUENCE...
N-NO... I DIDN'T WANT DUNSANY'S SIGNATURE. IT'S JUST...
I-I'D READ A PIECE IN *PINE CONES*, AND MY FRIEND POINTED YOU OUT AS ITS ***AUTHOR.*** BUT I UNDERSTAND IF...
BY ***GAWD!*** MY DEAR FELLOW, ***PLUNKETT*** MAY BE REPLETE WITH FLATTERY, BUT I CAN'T GET ***ENOUGH*** OF THE STUFF!
THIS IS INDEED A MOMENTOUS ENCOUNTER!

BOY, IS THAT A RELIEF!
I'M A WRITER MYSELF, TOURING NEW ENGLAND IN SEARCH OF INSPIRATION. YOUR STORY ASTONISHED ME, LINKING A RURAL SETTING WITH *INFINITY*...
WHY, THANK YOU... AND ANOTHER ***AUTHOR?*** YOU MUST VISIT RHODE ISLAND IN YOUR TRAVELS!
IF THEY COULD, THE MOTIVELESS STARS ABOVE WOULD SURELY HAVE ENGINEERED OUR CONVERGENCE...
YOU KNOW, I WAS ***THINKING*** OF VISITING RHODE ISLAND. THAT'S A VERY GENEROUS OFFER.
I'M ROBERT BLACK.
A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, MR. BLACK. YOU'LL FIND ME AT 598 ANGELL STREET IN HIS MAJESTY'S PROVINCE OF PROVIDENCE-PLANTATIONS.
I AM YOUR OBEDIENT SERVANT, HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT.

...GET ANYWHERE IF YOU TURN CHICKEN AT THE LAST MINUTE!
TH-THERE WERE TOO MANY PEOPLE. I MAY WRITE TO HIM...
AH, BUT MY FAIR COMPANION AND HER CHAPERONES APPROACH. A GOOD EVENING TO YOU, MR. BLACK. I'LL AWAIT YOUR VISIT.
ME TOO. GOODBYE, MR. LOVECRAFT. IT'S BEEN A REAL HONOR TO MEET YOU.
THERE. I'M READY TO DEPART IF YOU ARE.
DID I SPY YOU GUSHING OVER YOUR LATEST BIBLIOPHILIC PASSION?
I HOPE NOT. NO, I JUST TOLD HIM HOW MUCH I'D ENJOYED HIS STORY. HE SEEMED GENUINELY SURPRISED.
HE MAY BE THE ODDEST DUCK I EVER MET, BUT HE CERTAINLY HAS SOMETHING ABOUT HIM...
WELL, I ONLY KNOW HIM BY SIGHT, BUT THE TWO OR THREE TALES I'VE READ BY HIM HAVE BEEN STRANGELY MEMORABLE.
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. PASSAGES FROM 'BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP' KEEP RUNNING THROUGH MY MIND, AS IF IT'S HAUNTING ME.
AH, WELL. I GUESS WE'RE WALKING HOME BY SEPARATE ROUTES?
SO I ASSUME, WITH THE VENDOME NEARBY... UNLESS YOU INTEND TO ESCORT ME ACROSS THE RIVER FOR MY NIGHTLY CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S CEMETERY.
I TAKE IT I SHALL SEE YOU ON THE MORROW?
OH, I'LL BE HERE A WEEK OR SO BEFORE MOVING ON. GOODNIGHT, RANDALL. THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.
SWEET DREAMS.

From my experience I cannot doubt but that man, when lost to terrestrial consciousness, is indeed sojourning in another and incorporeal life...
...of far different nature from the life we know; and of which only the slightest and most indistinct memories linger after waking.
From these blurred and fragmentary memories we may infer much, yet prove little.
We may guess that in dreams life, matter, and vitality, as the earth knows such things, are not necessarily constant...
...and that time and space do not exist as our waking selves comprehend them.
Sometimes I believe that this less material life is our truer life...
...and that our vain presence on the terraqueous globe is itself the secondary, or merely virtual phenomenon.
Providence

September 24th

Well, Wednesday already. I should probably have made an entry or two before today, but the truth is that I've been having far too good a time to bother with trivialities like self-discipline or my prospective writing career. It looks like for once my hopeful predictions of an upturn in my fortunes have been founded, and I just this moment realised that these last three days I haven't thought once about Lily, or about my ghastly and ridiculous hallucinations while I was in Manchester. Whatever that hypnotic psychiatry business that Ronnie Pitman offered to help me with was, it certainly seems to have worked! Or perhaps it was Ronnie's thoughtful suggestion that I should contact a fellow writer with some experience of this supposed "dream world" that actually did the trick, but either way I'm feeling better than I have done in months, or maybe even years. And, no, the reason for my state of relative elation isn't that I've fallen for another pretty, empty-headed receptionist like the one in Athol – the Vendome is a very good-looking hotel although its staff are perhaps less so, at least to my eye – and in fact my romantic life is the one element of my situation that is frustratingly stalled and less than satisfactory. But that is, at present, a small concern next to my growing appreciation of the remarkable Mr. Randall Carver and the fertile, teeming landscape of the American imagination to which he has introduced me.

To start at the beginning, after spending a very agreeable Sunday at the hotel doing absolutely nothing, on Monday morning I made the lengthy walk down to F Street and called at number 58, where I found a very relaxed and agreeable Randall Carver waiting to greet me. The wariness and puzzlement I'd sensed upon our first meeting two days before was entirely dissipated and, when I think about it, was more than likely a product of having a complete stranger turn up on his doorstep unannounced and wanting to talk about New England mysteries. This time, having expected my visit, Carver was the perfect host. He invited me into the delightfully archaic property he calls his home, and I barely had time to marvel at all of the elegant yet restrained decoration of the interior as he escorted me through to his study, which immediately put all other marvels from my mind. It really was the most astonishing place, and immediately made me supremely envious. This was the study of a real writer and literary fellow, and I resolved upon the spot that were I to ever possess the resources and the requisite

good taste to furnish myself with such a retreat, this was the kind of room that I should have. There were bookshelves and bookcases everywhere, reaching from floor to ceiling and weighed down with what seemed all the worthwhile knowledge of the world. An entire wall appeared to be reserved for the great scribes of classical antiquity, people like Pliny and Aristophanes; names that I know and to which I will nod wisely if they arise in conversation, but whose work I've never looked at because of my assumption that it would be too dusty and dry and difficult for me. Seeing Carver's collection, the accumulated wisdom of a genuine scholar, made me feel even more shallow and superficial than usual. His other books, discounting a trove of tomes on the subject of mysticism and oriental philosophy and an impressive selection of the poets, artists and authors of the fin du siecle period that made me wretchedly jealous, were even more embarrassing in that I had never even heard of the writers included, although I had no doubt that I probably should have done. Every surface that wasn't occupied by books became a perch for a great multiplicity of Eastern deities as statuettes, and there were fascinating occult artefacts of every kind. The whole inner sanctum was charged with such presence and atmosphere, like a distillation of Carver's intellect and personality into a physical environment, and to reinforce the sensation there was a delicious fug of incense hanging as a tangled curtain of vapour in the chamber's upper reaches. I remember reading of some late 19th century Englishwoman, possibly one of the Bloomsbury set, who described her favourite interior decor as being "all green and idols", and Carver's study fitted that description to a T.

We sat in the antique-looking armchairs and we just talked and talked for hours – or rather, Randall did most of the talking while I merely listened in spellbound awe, staggered by the sheer breadth of his knowledge and experience. Carver is around twenty years older than me, being in his late forties, but has had the kind of life that people like me could only dream about, including a casually-mentioned spell in the French foreign legion. It isn't so much where he's been or what he's done that makes him such a compelling figure, however, as the amount that he's read and some of the jewel-like fantastic short stories and poems that he's written. Our lengthy conversation that first day, interrupted only briefly when Carver insisted on fixing me something to eat, was like an education in literature, and fantastic literature in particular. He knew all the ins and outs of

the Gothic novel, from Otranto to Melmoth, and had an extensive knowledge of more recent masters of supernatural fiction like M.R. James and Algernon Blackwood, authors whom I confess I've paid little attention to, that left me reeling. When I asked about his own writings he was charmingly self-effacing and dismissive, claiming that they didn't amount to much of significance, being only a few privately-printed slim editions of his prose-poems and some material that had been printed by an "Amateur Press Association". I'm ashamed to admit that I didn't know what this was, but that I didn't ask Carver to explain for fear of being thought ignorant—and by then the conversation had moved on to another intriguing topic as a result of Carver's lightning-fast and mercurial intelligence, and of the vast range of subjects in which he is both interested and highly knowledgeable. Obviously, I was enthralled by the man. I suppose that if I wanted to get all psychological about it I'd say that the age-difference between us makes me want to cast Carver as some sort of intellectual father-figure, the sensitive and literary Dad I never had, added to which I genuinely like the man. I wasn't so sure what Carver himself was getting from our conversation, but eventually I figured out that living here in Boston he might very well have few friends locally who share his elevated interests. I could be deceiving myself here, but I got the impression that he genuinely enjoyed my company almost as much as I did his, perhaps because he liked having an eager and receptive audience to whom he could display his massive breadth of arcane knowledge. Anyway, he must have had a pleasant time, because he pretty much commanded me to turn up the next day so that we could continue our illuminating and agreeable exchange ("Illuminating and agreeable exchange". I guess I'm so smitten with Randall that I'm starting to ape all his antique turns of phrase and mannerisms I must make a serious effort to stop that.) We spent Tuesday in breathless conversation, pretty much the same way that we'd spent Monday, the major difference being that Carver loaned me a couple of examples of his writing to take away with me and explained that he wouldn't be able to see me until later next week owing to a rare excursion out of town to visit an acquaintance in Vermont. Nonetheless he assured me that he'd enjoyed our talks immensely, and told me that I must call and visit him as soon as he got back to Boston, which of course I promised on the instant so to do.

I've spent the best part of today just sitting in my room here at the

Vendome, reading Randall's prose-poems and stories. I have to say that while some of the language sounds a little forced or stilted to my unschooled ear – and I'm reluctant to venture any criticism of a writer who's clearly so much further along the literary path than I am – the sheer rush of invention and imagination is breathtaking. One of the privately published volumes is, I suppose, a long short story or perhaps a novella entitled "Twilight Odyssey", which I just finished before starting this overdue entry in my commonplace book. It's a long and dreamlike narrative, meandering in the very nicest sense of the word, that takes place in an uncharted region of the Congo, with an impetuous and yet somehow bookish explorer not unlike Carver himself navigating his small craft along an eerie river "which did not exist according to the region's numerous cartographers, or else after deliberation was omitted from their maps by reason of a terrible sense of responsibility." I suppose it's what you'd call a picaresque adventure, with the hero drifting down the river from one strange and surreal land to another, his bizarre encounters having little to do with each other and only connected by the slender plot-thread of his continuing journey. That said, some of the ideas and imagery that this device allows Carver to introduce are quite astonishing. For example, there's a passage where the tale's protagonist reaches a stretch of river that's inhabited by creatures that are somehow made from music, sound of such complexity that it has manifested as a kind of luminous and flashing matter and engendered living forms: "immense arachnid or crustacean semblances as though blown molten out of colored glass, their tendrils the thin scream of violins, their plated shells the indomitable gold of trumpets." Elsewhere Carver serves up enormous carnivorous birds that sport the tiara-clad heads of beautiful women, a land where time itself can be distilled into a kind of brandy, and what I suppose you might call a "were-where", in that the traveller finds himself forced to rest over a moonlit night in a remote and austere mansion where so many threatening and ghastly things occur that he retires outdoors "to sleep beneath the gently droning murmur-ferns", only to find upon waking the next morning that the house has gone, replaced by a powerfully-built old man of sinister demeanour who confesses that it is he himself who transforms by moonlight to a looming, haunted edifice. As I said, Carver's imagination is wonderfully bizarre, and his writing often has a playful sense of humor about it. Even in the darker passages of "Twilight Odyssey" you get the sense that this might all be a preposterous tall tale intended to amuse as well as captivate the lucky reader.

Suffice it to say that reading Carver's work has made the absence of real story ideas in these pages of late quite conspicuous, and I've resolved to spend a few days behaving like the real honest-to-gosh writer I aspire to be by knuckling down and coming up with some imaginative exploits of my own. Not tonight, because I'm frankly still feeling just a little drained and fragile after my perhaps over-active imagination during these last few weeks, but definitely soon. Anyway, I intend to read a few of Carver's shorter prose poems before retiring, so we'll see what kind of inspiration they bring.

September 28th

I've been drifting around Boston these last few days, not getting any real work done but pretending to myself that I'm "looking for ideas". I thought up a few fantastic-type concepts, but they were so obviously pallid imitations of Carver's work that I abandoned them in embarrassment. (Example: "A land where the trees are all made out of mathematics." I don't even know what that means.) Oddly enough, I did come up with what might be the beginnings of a notion after a lengthy dream I had last night, or at least a few images that were striking enough for me to want to record them here, although ironically it was nothing like the so-called 'dreamy' fantasies that I've been trying to get to grips with these last several days. For one thing it began back in Milwaukee, in the rundown streets I used to play in as a child, which is about as far from Randall's opalescent and forgotten cities like Lilililat or Thundering Cadambrua as it is possible to get. I think that in the dream I may have been a child, at least to start with, although by the end it had all shifted and I was around the age that I am now. When it commenced I was perhaps ten or eleven, playing stickball with some other kids from down the block. One of the other boys — I think it was either Chuck Johnson or his younger brother Pete, or possibly some sort of composite — approached me privately and said he had a message for me "from a certain someone" who was anxious to meet up with me "at the old bridge across the river." This news was delivered with an air of smirking schoolboy innuendo which suggested that the assignation was romantic in some way. I asked which bridge he meant, and in reply he pointed to a massive structure way off down the street's far end that, from a distance, looked like nothing so much as the Brooklyn Bridge that had been somehow relocated to Milwaukee. I set off towards it with

a slightly anxious feeling, as if getting to this bridge was monumentally important in some way, but that I wasn't going to like it when I got there. Even though my route had seemed straightforward when I set out, I kept getting lost and at one point I found that I was passing by the Herald offices across the street's far side. I'm pretty sure I was grown up by this stage of the dream. I glanced up at the building's upper windows as I passed it, and I saw that Freddy Dix was standing in the office gazing down at me and looking really sad. He took a hip flask from his pocket and he raised it to me in a sort of toast, still looking sorrowful, as I walked by. I can remember thinking what a kind, sweet-natured kid Dix was, whereas of course in real life I could hardly stand him. Anyway, I carried on towards my destination, only when I caught sight of the bridge again it was much smaller and completely different, much more like the flat and functional affairs you'd find in somewhere like Salem or Athol. I continued on regardless, and have the impression that along the way there may have been some other minor incidents that have now slipped my memory — something about a young man, very well dressed, with a bright yellow cravat pulled up absurdly to conceal his mouth — but in the end I finally got to the bridge and found that it had changed again, so that it now resembled the long bridge in Manchester across the Merrimack that I took when I walked down from St. Anselm College to Goffs Falls that first time. There seemed to be quite a lot of people on the bridge, just crossing back and forth, but right out at the centre of the span I saw someone just standing at the rail, completely motionless save for a moment when it looked like they were scattering wedding confetti on the waters of the river, and I realised with a jolt that it was Lily. I was suddenly possessed by an immediate conviction that the death, the suicide, had been a simple case of mistaken identity. I felt a huge rush of relief, and cursing myself for the pointless torment that I'd gone through, I rushed out onto the bridge, only to instantly lose sight of Lily in the throng of individuals who were then coming across it from the opposite direction. These were, in themselves, a memorably odd assortment that included Mr. Orme and Mr. Annesley whom I met briefly back in Salem — though why I should think of them all these months later I have no idea, but then I guess that's dreams for you — and the most incongruous element of a small Negro child dressed up in a scaled-down tuxedo and puffing conspicuously on a gigantic cigar. I dread to even think on what Professor Freud would make of that! I hurried on,

but when I next glimpsed Lily standing at the rail ahead of me I realised that I'd been mistaken: this was a defeated-looking man in middle age who may have had a withered hand or something, and he wasn't scattering confetti but instead appeared to be tearing a book to pieces and then casting the ripped pages down into the rushing Merrimack. One detail I remember was that on the fluttering torn-up pages all the text was violet, which made me assume the book to be a decadent work, possibly Claude Guillot's Sous Le Monde. There were still people on the bridge coming the other way (including, ridiculously, a fellow that I felt convinced was poor old Ambrose Bierce) and the defeated-looking man was quickly lost from view among the jostling crowd. When I next sighted him, he wasn't the same person anymore, and indeed wasn't even male. Where he'd been standing was a naked woman, calm and unembarrassed by her public nudity, much like the figures in the paintings of Delvaux, except that this one had a far more serious and, indeed, ominous look in her eyes, and also appeared to be in the later stages of a very bulbous pregnancy. As I neared her she was staring at me, and there suddenly was no one on the bridge save me and her. With the sure logic that we have in dreams I knew that this was why Chuck-or-Pete Johnson had been smirking: I was being set up by this brazen woman in an obviously false claim of paternity. Behind my back, over my head, I'd been the unsuspecting victim of some complex and unfathomable stratagem or else conspiracy to lure me to this spot, and with a dreadful certainty I knew that I had blithely walked into an unbelievable and monstrous trap. The woman was still staring at me meaningfully, whereon I decided that the safest course of action would be to walk past as if I didn't know her — which of course I didn't. I noticed that rather than scattering confetti or being engaged in tearing up a copy of Claude Guillot, J.K. Huysmans or Theophile Gautier, the pregnant woman had an intact copy of what looked like Hali's Booke beneath her arm, resting against her bulging belly. I walked by, determined not to look at her or offer any signs of recognition, and as I was doing so she spoke to me. She said, "I think I once stayed at the same hotel as you did, with the same view out the window." I'd gone past her by the time she said this, but interpreted it as a further wrinkle in her plan to make me think that she was carrying my baby by insinuating that we'd once shared a hotel room. Thinking that I should at least pause to refute her groundless claim, I stopped and looked back. As I did so, I realised belatedly

that I'd already reached the far side of the bridge, and also that once more the bridge had changed. It was now no more than a few brief yards from one side to the other, and instead of spanning the torrential Merrimack it was now nothing but a little ornamental bridge fording a narrow stream. The pregnant woman, similarly, was now disappeared to be replaced once more by Lily, and I felt a pang of instant guilt at having just walked by her and pretended not to know her. Lily, who was again scattering confetti on the trickling surface of the stream, looked at me with the same sad, pitying expression of concern that Freddy Dix had shown me earlier, and said "You know it's always a new world there on the far side of this bridge." For some dream-reason that I can't explain I understood this, with a jolt of inexplicable despair and fear, to mean that I had irrevocably condemned myself to some appalling doom. Crossing the bridge had somehow sealed my fate, and I was sure that if I just turned back and looked at the "new world" that waited for me at the bridge's far end, I'd see nothing save my own certain erasure and extinction. I was just about to do this, with a formless, stomach-dropping premonition of what I should see, when I woke up to find it was a pleasant Sunday morning at the Vendome and I was surrounded by my weak attempts to mimic Carver's baroque dreamland narratives.

Even with the whole nightmare scrawled down as above, I still can't see entirely what affected me so much regarding all of this nocturnal nonsense, or why I supposed it might amount to anything in terms of being the beginning of a story. The most powerful thing about the dream, for reasons that I can't articulate, was just the central symbol of the bridge itself, this structure — I believe the word is "liminal" — which exists at the ambiguous limits of two worlds and also joins those worlds together. What I'm thinking, looking at the account overhead, is that this isn't the idea from which to fashion a bejewelled dream-fantasy, but that the bridge might make a striking central metaphor or motif for my "Marblehead" book once I seriously get down to writing it. Maybe I'll spend the next few days till Randall's back in town in giving some more serious thought to how I'm going to structure all of that, along with coming up characters, a plot and all the things I'll need to flesh out what is presently, it shames me to admit, not much more than a page or two of sample prose and some vague, nebulous ideas about New England folklore and New England folk. We'll see if I accomplish anything, or if this turns out to be idle talk and lofty theorizing as it often does with me.

October 3rd

As you can see, it turned out to be idle talk as usual, but that is much mitigated by the fact that Randall got back yesterday. I spent all day with him today, and he was saying that he'd be delighted if I called again tomorrow. Our whole conversation was so filled with interesting facts, exotic fables and hitherto unknown authors' names, and was such splendid fun that I simply cannot be bothered to record it here. I intend to spend as much time as I can on F Street over this next week or two, but hopefully that won't lead to too many gaps in these accounts.

October 17th

So much for that. The only reason that I'm taking time to scribble these few lines is that it's Friday night and I've just returned from another day with Randall (who has loaned me some of the Amateur Press Association publications that he talked about for my eager perusal), who apparently is occupied with other matters over the weekend, but who insists he'll see me Monday bright and early so that he can finally disclose some of these fascinating dream-techniques he's mentioned. Also, last week Randall mentioned a forthcoming visitor to Boston, no less than an Irish nobleman called Lord Dunsany who's an author Randall speaks of as the greatest living influence on his own work. Apparently he's speaking at the Plaza Hotel here on Monday night — conveniently it's not far from the Vendome — and it seems that Carver has secured both of us tickets of admission. It promises to be quite an eventful day, and hopefully I'll bring myself to end this laziness and write more then,

October 20th

I am quite literally thunderstruck, with such a torrent of ideas and thoughts cascading through my head that I'm afraid to write them down in case it all comes out as incoherent nonsense, since I'm feeling more than usually incoherent and nonsensical at present. Obviously, as ever, the best thing would be to start at the beginning — or at least where I left off last Friday night, cocooned here in the Vendome on my own and looking forward to perusing the few stapled,

flimsy pamphlets loaned to me by Randall as examples of the amateur press publications that had previously puzzled me so much. These were a revelation, both the issues of The Irregular that have Randall's stories in them and the single issue of something called Pine Cones, of which I shall speak more presently. In brief, it seems the Amateur Press Association is, as one might suppose from its name, an association (or perhaps more accurately two or three associations that enjoy a sometimes friendly, sometimes not-so-friendly rivalry with one another) of enthusiastic would-be authors, amateurs in that they work for the sheer love of writing, who each regularly publish mimeographed examples of their work which are then circulated to the other members of the group for mutual appraisal. Quality, of course, is very variable, but the sheer zest and energy of these enthusiasts is quite contagious in its inspiration and excitement. I just wish something like this had been around back in Milwaukee, or perhaps it was and I just wish I'd heard about it. To commence with The Irregular, it's perhaps sixteen pages long and printed in a lurid purple-lilac shade that smells vaguely of rubbing alcohol by someone called F. Charles McAllister who seemingly resides elsewhere in Boston (and whom I learned later is just seventeen years old!) From what I gather The Irregular is relatively new, and with its relatively undistinguished content it has yet to truly be accepted, even in the ranks of amateurdom. Having met its youthful publisher at some local event, Randall had taken pity on him and had promised to ennoble the magazine's pages with a couple of submissions, self-described "throwaway pieces" that had, by some oversight, not previously seen print. The first (and in my own opinion slightest) of these makes its debut in the second issue of the purple periodical, dated November last year. Called "A Thing of Beauty and a Joy Forever", it recounts the story of a beautiful young man from ancient Greece who, rather vainly, seeks a woman who's his match in loveliness and is informed that in a distant land there dwells the fairest of three sisters, and that none who'd seen her could report the least flaw to her pulchritude. Finally reaching the appointed place, the somewhat narcissistic youth discovers halls filled with the most exquisitely crafted and detailed statues, mostly of extremely beautiful young men almost as gorgeous as himself. The ending of the story, which I felt was given away much to early by insisting on the almost supernatural detail of the statues, is that the three sisters in question are the Gorgons of mythology, and that the fairest of these is Medusa

(whom I must confess I had forgotten was originally described as turning men to stone with her extraordinary beauty), which accounts for all those lifelike statues, whose ranks in the end are of course joined by the protagonist. The language was quite lovely, as is usual with Randall's work, but as I've said I thought that otherwise the story was too lacklustre and obvious. Much better (and much more distinctively original) was Randall's piece "The Crawler from the Clouds" in issue three of *The Irregular*, released in April this year and from what I gather possibly the final number of the title. This concerns a man, a mountaineer exploring the world's loftiest peaks, who finds himself engulfed by a strangely gelatinous and luminescent airborne entity of a variety that seemingly only abide in our atmosphere's highest reaches. Rather than being eaten, as he first suspects, the mountaineer finds that he has instead been requisitioned as a kind of living part or a component that this weird, etheric monster needs to navigate successfully; almost a pilot mechanism, albeit one of an organic nature. The most startling and affecting thing about the story lies in Randall's wonderful descriptions of the character's enhanced perceptions and new senses as he flies his manta ray-like chariot and captor through the icy stratosphere. In my opinion it's the finest piece of Randall's writing that I've read so far, but must admit that it pales into insignificance beside the quite remarkable short story by another amateur that I discovered in the much more polished *Pine Cones*.

While substantially enjoying much the same production methods as the far more juvenile and error-prone *Irregular*, *Pine Cones* is produced by one John Clinton Pryor who seems to be a more mature and more discriminating individual than young F. Charles McAllister. It's also a more recent offering, in that the magazine, when taken as a whole, is some few cuts above the general quality (excluding Randall's work) of *The Irregular*, but the most striking piece by far is a short story, quite unlike anything else I can remember reading, called "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" and written by a most exciting author by the name of H.P. Lovecraft. It's the startling and unnerving tale of a low-born and brutish Catskill hillbilly known as Joe Slater, seemingly demented and incarcerated in an institution after murdering another man. In the denouement of the story it transpires (if I have understood it all correctly) that this violent lowlife individual is actually possessed or otherwise inhabited by the unfathomable intelligence of a remote exploding star. Just for the staggering idea that stars might actually be

conscious, thinking entities alone that has to rank as one of the most stunning and original short stories that I've ever come across, and if it seems that I am rhapsodizing at unnecessary length about a passing literary fancy then I promise you that all will be made lucid before the conclusion of this entry.

After a weekend of reading and rereading Mr. Lovecraft's story, I rose earlier than usual this morning and made the long trek to Randall's home on F Street with an eagerness I've seldom felt before. Endearingly, he welcomed me into his home clad in the fez and curling Turkish slippers which I now know he affects in private but only feels comfortable while wearing in the company of trusted and select acquaintances, which makes me feel distinctly honoured. After I'd been made to say hello to Randall's much-loved and, I'm sure, extremely pampered cat Black Sambo, we sat down to one of our delightfully far-ranging conversations. This covered the Stella Sapiente, of whom Randall knows a little although he has never been remotely tempted to become a member, being "not much of a joiner" as he puts it, and eventually touched upon his "Crawler from the Clouds" yarn and my admiration for the Lovecraft story. He revealed a few more details of his early life, including what would seem a relatively privileged upbringing (he'd a family servant named Elijah of whom he was very fond) in rural Manchester, raised by an aunt and uncle following the early death of his well-situated Boston parents. When he talked about his childhood I received a strong impression of almost unbearable nostalgic yearning for a lost time that was rather vulnerable and quite at odds with Randall's usual languid, mannered, droll demeanour, which at times seems styled on that of Oscar Wilde although without, as far as I can tell, Wilde's other tendencies in tow.

One overriding topic was the great importance dreams have played in Carver's life, right from his earliest boyhood imagining of dreams as happening in another world that had its own shifting geography. He told me a hair-raising story about a former friend called Harvey Warner who had vanished in a subterranean exploration of cemetery in Florida, an event which Randall seemed uncertain as to whether it had been dream or reality. From this our talk progressed to the specific techniques Randall used to enter the dream state while still somehow remaining conscious, something Ronnie Pitman tried to demonstrate to me as an example of the methods of the Stella Sapiente. Randall's method, though, seemed to involve a form of self-hypnosis that was much more understandable

and rational in its procedures than the "going downstairs" trick that Ronnie Pitman introduced me to and which I still don't fully understand. With Randall's self-devised technique, however, all that's needed is to close your eyes and then to forcefully simply imagine you're descending an enormous staircase into your subconscious depths and into dreams, without the need to carry out these actions in material reality like Ronnie did. Randall has labelled his technique "the seven hundred steps to deeper slumber", and that's exactly how far one must mentally descend to properly experience the dream-world Carver's stories are describing. It was the most extraordinary experience, as florid and fantastical as Carver's tales and certainly quite unlike any dream I've ever personally had. We journeyed through an eerie landscape with its own peculiar inhabitants, and at the height of our adventure only had to open our eyes and be instantly returned to Carver's incense-perfumed study, where I was reminded that this evening we were due to visit Boston's Plaza hotel for a reading by Carver's great literary idol Lord Dunsany.

On the way there, through the darkening Boston streets that are patrolled still by the National Guard in lieu of a police force since the strike, there was one unexpected incident when we ran into none other than Hector North and his close friend James Montague. Thinking about it, I suppose I should have kept in mind that the last time I saw the pair they were about to hurriedly leave Manchester for Boston, but it was still something of a shock to reacquaint myself with them. Not half as shocking, it appears, as it seems to have been for Hector North. The poor man, once so smugly self-assured, seemed utterly deranged by fright the moment he set eyes on me, and started raving senselessly about me trying to lead someone to him, and at one point just before an irritated-looking Montague led him away, I think he said that I was "scratching in the earth", whatever that's supposed to mean. We carried on towards the Plaza, where the evening's entertainment really started.

Barely had we found our seats when the magnificent Dunsany was formally introduced, and my God, what a man he is! A military hero and an Irish giant with the most intoxicating accent that I've ever heard, a voice that curls around your ears like wood-smoke and which even makes Tom Malone's cockle-warming tones sound light and commonplace in terms of depth and resonance. Dunsany was just warming up to read his splendid short play, "The

Queen's Enemies", when Carver almost took my breath away with the announcement that just a few rows in front of us he'd spotted none other than the same H.P. Lovecraft whom I'd earlier been enthusing over to him. Hardly able to believe it, I spent much of Lord Dunsany's marvellous performance peering at the back of Lovecraft's head and trying to get some measure of the man from this restricted glimpse. Despite a certain antique bearing, I was most surprised to find that he looked not much older than myself, even though from the diction in his story I'd somehow expected a far older man. He sat with a young woman and an older lady that I took to be the couple's escort, along with a young boy who looked rather bored with the proceedings. Going on from his grim story of a Queen's revenge on her imagined enemies, Dunsany showed his breadth with the recounting of a comic yarn entitled "Why the Milkman Shudders When he Perceives the Dawn". When the reading was concluded and Dunsany was up on the hotel ballroom's stage signing a slew of autographs for his admirers, during one of Randall's visits to the restroom, I screwed up my almost non-existent courage and went boldly up to Lovecraft before clumsily attempting to engage him in a conversation. It was funny: he seemed cold at first, as if I were addressing some severe and elderly disciplinarian, but when I mumbled in embarrassment how much I'd liked his story he appeared to light up with a fervour and enthusiasm that was almost juvenile. He's genuinely one of the most curiously compelling men I've ever met, his speech and mannerisms laden with archaic affectations, as if he were an unusually clever schoolboy who was having fun pretending to be an old man. In the few minutes before Randall came back from the restroom, Lovecraft and I had achieved such a rapport that he'd invited me to visit him in his Rhode Island hometown once I was all finished here in Boston— which I think might now be sooner than I was originally intending. Reading all this back I'm wretchedly aware of how infatuated this must seem, but in those moments when I talked to Lovecraft I felt utterly convinced that I had somehow found my first writer of genius, and that I'd stumbled on the key to my whole journey through New England in my quest for a career as a real author. We said our goodbyes, Randall returned, and everyone filed out into the Boston night, me with the sonorous and eerily suggestive phrases from "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" still echoing in my excitable and over-stimulated mind. I genuinely feel as if my wanderings thus far have all been leading me to my one true and certain destination. Leading me to Providence.

CHAPTER 9

"Intoxication follow'd—
Kingston—East Greenwich with its
steep Georgian alleys climbing up
from the railway—Apponaug and its
ancient roofs—Auburn—just outside
the city limits—I fumble with bags
and wraps in a desperate effort to
appear calm—THEN—a delirious
marble dome outside the window—
a hissing of air brakes—
a slackening of speed—surges of
ecstasy and dropping of clouds
from my eyes and mind—HOME—
UNION STATION—*PROVIDENCE!!!!*"

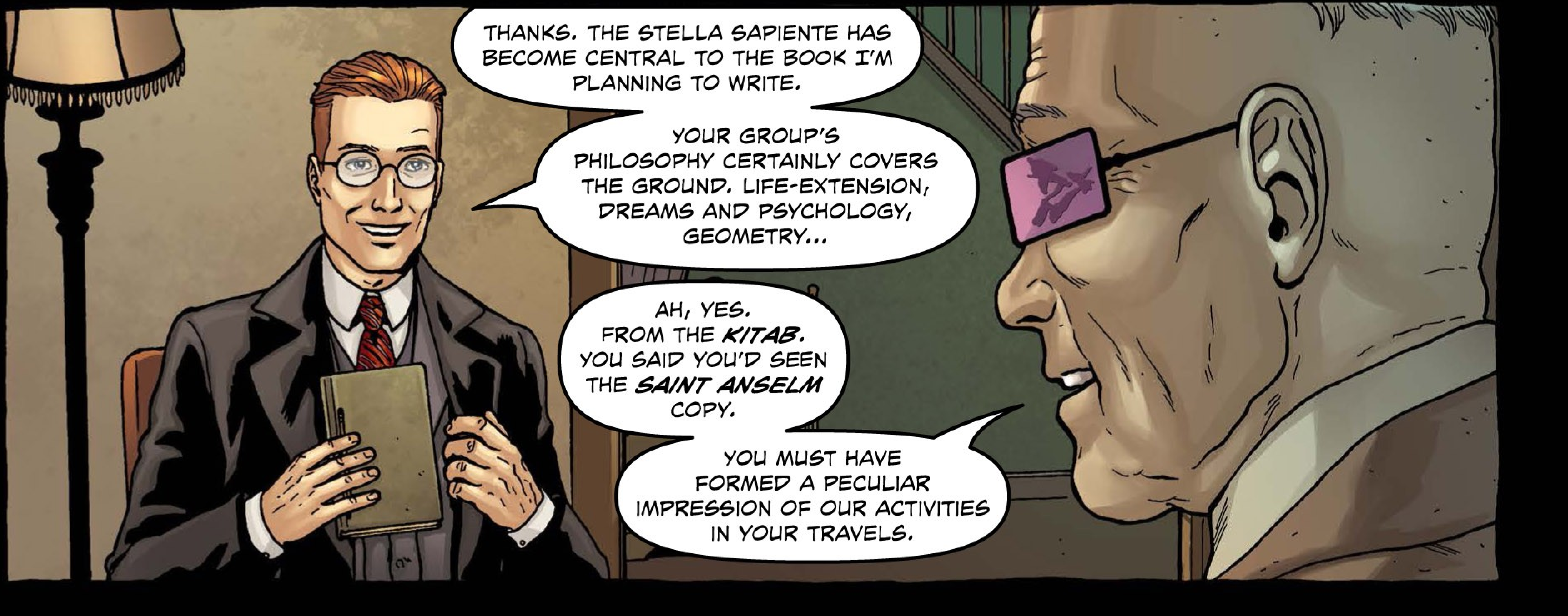
—To Frank Belknap Long
May 1st, 1926

PROVIDENCE
UM... EXCUSE ME? WOULD YOU BE MR. HENRY ANNESLEY?
I WROTE TO YOU THROUGH MY FRIEND RANDALL, WHO KNOWS YOUR COUSIN WALLACE TILLINGHAST...
AHA! SO, IT'S THE CELEBRATED MR. BLACK. THIS... THIS IS QUITE AN *HONOR.*
HOW HAS PROVIDENCE BEEN TREATING YOU SO FAR?
WELL, I ONLY JUST ARRIVED, BUT I'VE ALREADY ATTRACTED MY FAIR SHARE OF SUSPICIOUS *GLANCES.*
I GUESS IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS I'M FROM OUT OF TOWN.

OH, YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WITH OLDER COMMUNITIES LIKE THIS. ANYONE FROM BEYOND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SEEMS LIKE AN *ABNORMALITY*.
THE STRANGER OR INTRUDER, I'M AFRAID, IS JUST ONE MORE THING TO MISTRUST OR EVEN *FEAR*.
IX: OUTSIDERS

WHY ROULET AND COLWEN CHOSE HERE TO ESTABLISH OUR FRATERNITY, I'LL NEVER KNOW.
MY HOUSE AND WORKSHOP IS ALONG THIS WAY, INCIDENTALLY. IT WAS SIMPLY EASIER TO MEET HERE BY BROWN'S UNIVERSITY...
I'M JUST GRATEFUL TO THE STELLA SAPIENTE FOR BEING SO *OPEN*.
UM... THOSE ARE UNUSUAL SPECTACLES. THEY'RE NOT PRESCRIPTION LENSES...
1812
NO. NO, THEY'RE NOT.
THEY'RE A PROTOTYPE OF MY OWN, TO RETRIEVE LIGHT FROM THE FAR VIOLET FREQUENCIES AND FURTHER STILL.
AND OUR ORDER HAS *ALWAYS* BEEN OPEN... THOUGH OUR DETRACTORS WOULD HAVE IT *OTHERWISE*.
HA. WELL, YOU DO SEEM TO ENJOY A CERTAIN SNOOTY REPUTATION IN PLACES LIKE *ATHOL* AND *SALEM*...
HUM. NOW, IN ATHOL, THE WHEATLEYS ARE AN EXCELLENT BAD EXAMPLE. THE WORST TYPE OF INBRED TRASH.
SALEM... WELL, THE BOGGS PROJECT WAS GETTING OUT OF HAND. WE DISASSOCIATED OURSELVES.
YOU KNOW, IN SALEM I MET A MR. *SHADRACH* ANNESLEY.
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU AND HE COULD BE RELATED, BY ANY REMOTE CHANCE?
YOU *MET* HIM? SO MY GREAT... MY UNCLE IS STILL WITH US, THEN?
WE'D, UH, WE'D HEARD THERE'D BEEN AN ACCIDENT. A LIGHTNING-BOLT OR SOMETHING.
IT SEEMED SUCH A SHAME. HE WAS ALWAYS A MAN WITH A TREMENDOUS APPETITE FOR LIFE.
THIS IS WHERE I LIVE, BY THE WAY. DO COME IN.

BOY. I CAN SEE WHAT YOU MEAN ABOUT THIS BEING YOUR WORKPLACE AS WELL.
THE MORE I KNOW OF YOUR ORDER, THE MORE IT SEEMS LIKE IT'S A *SCIENTIFIC* BROTHERHOOD, RATHER THAN AN *OCCULT* ONE.
WELL, OUR *OFFICIAL* HEADQUARTERS IN PROVIDENCE IS THE BABBITT HOUSE ON BENEFIT STREET, OF COURSE, BUT YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT.
THE OCCULT IS THAT WHICH IS *HIDDEN.* THROUGH OUR SCIENCE WE HOPE TO *REVEAL* IT. COME... LET'S TAKE A SEAT.


THANKS. THE STELLA SAPIENTE HAS BECOME CENTRAL TO THE BOOK I'M PLANNING TO WRITE.
YOUR GROUP'S PHILOSOPHY CERTAINLY COVERS THE GROUND. LIFE-EXTENSION, DREAMS AND PSYCHOLOGY, GEOMETRY...
AH, YES. FROM THE *KITAB.* YOU SAID YOU'D SEEN THE *SAINT ANSELM* COPY.
YOU MUST HAVE FORMED A PECULIAR IMPRESSION OF OUR ACTIVITIES IN YOUR TRAVELS.

WELL, MAYBE, ALTHOUGH I'M STARTING TO THINK THAT ANY PECULIARITIES WERE THANKS TO MY OWN *MENTAL* CONDITION.
I, UH, I LOST A LOVED ONE RECENTLY. IT UNBALANCED ME MORE THAN I'D *REALISED.*
I'M SO SORRY. I CAN SEE THAT SOME OF OUR IDEAS MIGHT BE DISTURBING FOR SOMEONE IN AN EMOTIONALLY FRAGILE STATE...
OH, NO, PLEASE, MR. ANNESLEY. NOBODY WAS TO BLAME BUT ME. SOME OF THE THINGS I'VE IMAGINED... WELL, THEY'RE JUST CRAZY.
I'M VERY IMPRESSIONABLE, AND THINGS LIKE THE REDEEMER PROPHECY ARE INTRIGUING...
CERTAINLY. GARLAND WHEATLEY WAS *OBSESSED* BY IT.
ALTHOUGH COMING FROM NEW YORK SUCH IDEAS COULD BE A LITTLE UNSETTLING, I'M SURE.
WELL, IT'S THIS SENSE THAT THERE'S MORE TO EVERYTHING THAN I PERCEIVE, LIKE I'M NOT GETTING THE WHOLE *PICTURE.*
I'D HOPED YOU COULD PROVIDE SOME HARD MATERIAL FACTS ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION.
I'LL TRY. YOU KNOW WE DATE BACK TO 1686, WHEN ROULET BROUGHT HALI'S BOOK HERE TO AMERICA?
SINCE THEN, OUR INTERESTS HAVE ONLY EXPANDED.
MY OWN FIELD INVOLVES OPTICS AND METAPHYSICS.
UNLIKE POOR WHEATLEY, THE REDEEMER ISSUE DOESN'T PREOCCUPY US. WITH OUR VIEW OF *TIME,* IN A SENSE IT'S ALREADY *FULFILLED.*
HOW LITERALLY DO YOU MEAN THAT?
IS IT TRUE THE ORDER ATTEMPTED A REDEEMER THE SAME YEAR YOU GIFTED THE KITAB TO SAINT ANSELM COLLEGE?

OH DEAR. THAT SOUNDS LIKE GARLAND WHEATLEY'S VERSION: FACTUALLY CORRECT, BUT DEMENTED.
NO, YOU SEE, 'REDEEMER' IS A ***RANK*** WITHIN OUR ORDER, LIKE A TYLER IN FREEMASONRY. ONLY ***YOKELS*** TAKE IT LITERALLY.
IN 1889 THERE WAS AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE FOR REASONS OF SUCCESSION. EUROPEAN MONARCHS DO IT ALL THE TIME.
AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE?
ALL PERFECTLY CONSENSUAL, OF COURSE. OUR ORDER-HEAD'S DAUGHTER MARRIED HIS PROTÉGÉ, A NOVITIATE MEMBER WHOSE WORK INVOLVED METALS.
HAPPILY, THEY PRODUCED OFFSPRING ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. THEIR CHILD AUTOMATICALLY BECAME OUR CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICIAL POST OF 'REDEEMER'.
IT'S A PURELY CEREMONIAL ROLE, I ASSURE YOU.
SOUNDS ALMOST... DULL. WHAT ABOUT HALI'S BOOK?
WELL, ITS TEACHINGS ARE OUR BACKBONE, BUT BY 1889 WE HAD OTHER EDITIONS. WE GAVE ROULET'S ORIGINAL TO SAINT ANSELM.
WE'VE ALWAYS ENJOYED A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. IN FACT, EVER SINCE...
MR. ANNESLEY? HOPE YOU DON'T MIND, BUT I WAS PASSING AND...
OH. YOU HAVE COMPANY. I-I'M SORRY. I'LL...
AH! NOT AT ALL. PLEASE DO COME IN. THIS IS MR. BLACK, A NEW YORK JOURNALIST INTERVIEWING ME ABOUT THE ORDER.
MR. BLACK, THIS IS HOWARD. HOWARD ***CHARLES***. I'VE BEEN HELPING HIM WITH A GENEALOGICAL PROJECT.
OH. IT'S, UM, IT'S GREAT TO MEET YOU, HOWARD.
Y-YOU TOO. AND YOU'RE REALLY FROM NEW YORK?

HA HA. YES. YES, I'M AFRAID I AM. BELIEVE ME, IT'S NOT AS EXCITING AS YOU PROBABLY IMAGINE.
SO WHAT'S THIS PROJECT? YOU'VE AROUSED MY JOURNALISTIC INTEREST.
OH, HOWARD RECENTLY DISCOVERED HE HAS A HISTORICAL CONNECTION WITH US STELL SAPS.
WOULD YOU BELIEVE THIS YOUNG MAN IS A DIRECT DESCENDANT OF JAPHETH COLWEN?
COLWEN WHO CO-FOUNDED THE STELLA SAPIENTE? NOW *THAT'S* IMPRESSIVE.
I-I ONLY JUST FOUND OUT. MR. ANNESLEY'S BEEN HELPING ME *UNDER-STAND*...
HMM. LOOKS LIKE YOU YOUNGSTERS HAVE HIT IT OFF. YOU KNOW, MR. BLACK'S BEEN TO SALEM AND MANCHESTER.
I'LL BET HE KNOWS THINGS ABOUT YOUR ANCESTOR THAT EVEN I DON'T.
GEE, I'D SURE LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT SALEM. M-MAYBE I CAN SHOW YOU AROUND PROVIDENCE.
THAT WOULD BE SWELL... IF MR. ANNESLEY DOESN'T MIND ME RUSHING OFF?
WAIT, YOU HAVE A PIECE OF LINT... THERE. GONE.
OH, I WON'T KEEP YOU ANY LONGER. BESIDES, WASN'T THERE SOMEONE ELSE YOU PLANNED TO VISIT HERE?
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU KNOW, IT'S A FUNNY COINCIDENCE. DID I TELL YOU HIS NAME WAS HOWARD TOO?
NO. NO, I DON'T BELIEVE YOU DID.
HOWARD, DO SHOW MR. BLACK THE BABBITT HOUSE, WON'T YOU? AND ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, OF COURSE.
IT'S BEEN A PRIVILEGE, MR. BLACK. DO ENJOY YOUR STAY IN PROVIDENCE.

S-SO IS THIS STUFF ABOUT JAPHETH COLWEN FOR SOME ARTICLE IN YOUR NEWSPAPER?
NO, IT'S FOR A BOOK I'M RESEARCHING, BASED AROUND NEW ENGLAND CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS.
YOU KNOW, I'M PROBABLY IMAGINING THIS, BUT YOU LOOK A LITTLE LIKE WOODCUTS OF COLWEN I'VE SEEN.
MUCH YOUNGER, OBVIOUSLY. HOW OLD ARE YOU, HOWARD?
I'M SEVENTEEN. YOU KNOW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO PRETEND TO BE INTERESTED IN ME.
I'VE HAD A SHELTERED UPBRINGING. HARDLY BEEN OUTSIDE RHODE ISLAND MY WHOLE LIFE.
BEING RELATED TO COLWEN MAKES ME FEEL SPECIAL, LIKE I'M INVOLVED WITH HIM AND HIS WORLD.
D-DID YOU FIND OUT MUCH IN SALEM, MR. BLACK?
ABOUT COLWEN? WELL, IT SEEMS MOST OF THE FAMILIES THERE WORKED FOR HIM AS SEA- CAPTAINS AT SOME POINT.
I UNDERSTAND HE MOVED TO PROVIDENCE AROUND THE TIME OF THE WITCH-TRIALS...
Benevolent St
Benefit St.
WELL, AS A SCIENTIST... OR AN ALCHEMIST... HE'D BE SUSPECT.
H-HE WORKED WITH ETIENNE ROULET AT ROULET'S HOUSE. IT'S RIGHT ALONG HERE...
HERE, NUMBER ONE-THIRTY-FIVE. NOWADAYS IT'S MOSTLY CALLED THE BABBITT HOUSE, AFTER THE PEOPLE LIVING THERE.
MR. ANNESLEY SAYS THE ORDER LETS IT OUT TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF FAMILY, FOR THE MAINTENANCE.
THINGS HAPPENED THERE, I GUESS. MOST FOLKS AVOID IT.
THAT'S FASCINATING. WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH MR. ANNESLEY MENTIONED?

ST. JOHN'S? WELL, THAT'S QUITE A WAYS OFF TO THE WEST, ON FEDERAL HILL.
IF WE GO DOWN LAMB STREET AND ACROSS THE MOSSHASSUCK...
I'M UP FOR A LONG WALK IF YOU ARE... AND HOWARD, I'M REALLY NOT PRETENDING TO BE INTERESTED.
OF THE NEW ENGLAND MEN I'VE MET, YOU'RE GENUINELY *CAPTIVATING*.
OH.
WELL... GEE, THANKS.
I-I REALLY LIKE YOU TOO.
...AND THEN JUST OVER TWELVE MONTHS BACK, I STARTED MY JUNIOR YEAR AT MOSES BROWN SCHOOL.
WITH THE WAR AND EVERYTHING THERE WAS MILITARY TRAINING. I THOUGHT THAT WAS REAL EXCITING.
WITH THE UNIFORMS AND EVERYTHING? I'LL BET. IF I'D PASSED MY MEDICAL, I'D HAVE...
HOLY SMOKE! IS THIS IT? SAINT JOHN'S CHURCH?

THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S BEEN SHUT UP FOR A WHILE, ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE ITALIAN PEOPLE FROM RUTENBERG AND MOUNT PLEASANT STILL MAKE OFFERINGS HERE.
THE STELLA SAPIENTE WERE GIVEN SPACE IN THE STEEPLE FOR THEIR MEETINGS. THE ORDER AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH GO WAY BACK, ACCORDING TO MR. ANNESLEY.
RIGHT TO THE CHURCH'S BIBLICAL FOUNDATION, HE SAYS, BUT I FIGURE THAT'S LIKE THE FREEMASONS CLAIMING ANCIENT ORIGINS. W-WE CAN GET IN, IF YOU'D LIKE...
REALLY? WELL, THAT'S A VERY TEMPTING OFFER, EVEN IF IT'S PROBABLY A CRIMINAL OFFENCE. WHICH WAY DO WE GO?

THERE'S RAILINGS LOOSE HERE ROUND THE BACK, THEN THERE'S A SIDE-DOOR WHERE THE LOCK IS BROKEN.
I-I'D SOMETIMES BRING OTHER BOYS HERE, WHEN WE PLAYED TRUANT FROM SCHOOL.
HA HA. THAT SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING I'D DO, BACK IN MILWAUKEE.
DIDN'T YOU KIDS GET FRIGHTENED, ALONE TOGETHER IN A BIG DARK CHURCH?

WELL, THAT... THAT KIND OF MADE IT MORE OF A KICK, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
WE'D STAY AWAY FROM THE STEEPLE, THOUGH. THE THINGS THERE WERE TOO SCARY, UNTIL MR. ANNESLEY EXPLAINED THEM TO ME...
WHAT THINGS, AND SCARY IN WHAT WAY?
COULDN'T YOU JUST HAVE HELD EACH OTHER TIGHT OR SOMETHING?
WELL... YOU KNOW. WE COULD DO THAT DOWNSTAIRS.
THE THINGS IN THE TOWER ARE JUST OLD BOOKS AND THAT STONE FROM MANCHESTER, BUT THEY HAVE A SORT OF *ATMOSPHERE* AROUND THEM.
IT'S... WELL, IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN. YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE FOR YOURSELF.
THERE. THIS IS THE DOOR I TOLD YOU ABOUT...
...QUITE A CLIMB. IF YOU SAY THE ORDER HAVEN'T USED THIS CHURCH FOR YEARS, WHY HAVE THEY LEFT BOOKS AND ARTEFACTS HERE?
W-WELL, I ASKED MR. ANNESLEY. HE SAID THIS ROOM WAS FOR THE STELLA SAPIENTE'S *INNER* HEAD. ITS ***SECRET CHIEF.***
I'M NOT SURE WHAT THAT MEANS. THE PLACE LOOKED DERELICT TO ME.

HUH? WHAT ON EARTH IS... WAIT A MINUTE. YOU SAID 'THAT STONE FROM MANCHESTER'.
I-IS THIS THE METEORITE THAT HIT THE FARMLAND I SAW? SO BETWEEN THEM, THE ORDER AND THE CHURCH SPIRITED IT AWAY TO *PROVIDENCE*...
I GUESS SO.
DO YOU FEEL THE ATMOSPHERE? O-OTHER BOYS WOULDN'T COME IN HERE WITH ME.
WHY? WHAT WERE YOU GETTING UP TO AWAY FROM SCHOOL? WERE YOU...
MY GOD. *LIBER STELLA SAPIENTE?* THIS IS THE ORIGINAL LATIN INCUNABULUM FROM TOLEDO. THIS *CAN'T* BE REAL...
WELL, YOU KNOW BOYS. WE, UH, DID SOME CORNHOLING, STUFF LIKE THAT.
I-I GUESS YOU'RE TOO GROWN-UP FOR THAT KIND OF THING?

OUHH. OUHH, HOWARD, I HAVEN'T DONE THIS IN SO LONG...
I'M NOT... OOOHH... I'M NOT HURTING YOU?
OH JESUS. OH JESUS. NO. NO, IT FEELS GOOD. OH GOD, MR. BLACK...
OH, YES. OH, YES. CALL ME MR. BLACK, LIKE I'M YOUR TEACHER... OHHH!
DOES... DOES EVERYTHING LOOK BLUE? IT'S... OH, CHRIST. HOWARD, I'M GOING TO COME...
OH! OH! M-ME TOO. DO IT HARD, MR. BLACK. I CAN SEE THINGS IN THE STONE. FUCK ME HARD...
I CAN SEE... OHHHH!
OOHHHH!
OHHHH GOD...

...GET SO LITTLE OPPORTUNITY HERE IN RHODE ISLAND. NEW YORK MUST BE A PARADISE...
WELL, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT, BUT THAT WAS THE EXACT SAME REASON I MOVED THERE FROM ***MILWAUKEE.***
HOWARD, THAT WAS JUST WHAT I NEEDED. AFTER YOU'VE DIRECTED ME TO ANGELL STREET, MAYBE WE COULD GET TOGETHER LATER...?
W-WELL ANGELL STREET IS RIGHT ALONG BENEFIT, JUST PAST MEETING STREET, BUT AS FOR ANYTHING LATER...
I-I JUST WANT TO FIT IN, MR. BLACK. THAT'S WHY I'M CRAZY ABOUT JAPHETH COLWEN AND PROVIDENCE HISTORY.
I-IF PEOPLE THOUGHT I WAS QUEER, THEY'D STICK ME IN THE BUTLER HOSPITAL.
I-I UNDERSTAND. YOU TAKE CARE, HOWARD.

...AND YOU'RE HERE TO SEE MY NEPHEW? DO YOU KNOW, I THINK HE MENTIONED A VISITOR FROM NEW YORK.
YOU'D BEST COME IN, MR... BLACK, DID YOU SAY?
ONLY PLEASE DON'T TIRE HOWARD OUT, WILL YOU? YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND HE'S VERY ILL.
I-I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT. IS THIS SOMETHING RECENT? HE SEEMED SO HEARTY WHEN I MET HIM IN BOSTON LAST MONTH...
OH, THE POOR BOY. HE PUTS SUCH A BRAVE FACE ON THINGS, BUT THE TRUTH IS HE'S AFFLICTED BY A NERVOUS AILMENT.
HE'S AN INVALID. HAS BEEN SINCE HE WAS SMALL.
AND THEN, EVEN IN HIS CONDITION, DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT BOY DID TWO YEARS AGO?
WHY, HE ONLY WENT AND TRIED TO JOIN THE ARMY! HIS POOR MOTHER, THAT'S MY SISTER SUSIE, SHE SOON PUT A STOP TO THAT.
'COURSE, SHE'S IN HOSPITAL WITH NERVES HERSELF NOW. IT'S A FAMILY COMPLAINT.
OH. WELL, I'LL... I'LL TRY NOT TO EXCITE HIM.
YOU BE SURE AND SEE YOU DON'T.
HOWARD? IT'S A MR. BLACK FROM NEW YORK HERE TO SEE YOU. HE TELLS ME YOU'RE EXPECTING HIM...

WHY, MY DEAR ROBERTUS! PLEASE BE AFFORDED INGRESS TO MY MEAGRE SANCTUARY.
I TRUST MY YOUNG GRANDDAUGHTER HERE HAS NOT ALREADY WEARIED YOU WITH HER GIRLISH ENTREATIES?
Y-YOU MEAN YOUR... UM... THAT IS, I...
OH, I'LL JUST LEAVE YOU TWO MEN TO YOUR LITERARY TALK.
HOWARD, DON'T YOU FORGET YOUR GLASS OF MILK. I'LL BRING IT PRESENTLY.
WELL, WELL. SO YOU HAVE VISITED YOUR VENERABLE GRANDFATHER THEOBALD! I TAKE IT YOU'VE ARRANGED ACCOMMODATION IN OUR SWELL BOIG?
WELL, ACTUALLY, NO. NOT YET. I THOUGHT I'D FIND A HOTEL...
HM. PERHAPS NOT INCONCEIVABLE, THOUGH SURELY RUINOUSLY EXPENSIVE. PARTICULARLY IF YOU ANTICIPATE A LENGTHY STAY, AS YOUR EPISTLE INDICATED.
NO MATTER. I'M SURE THAT MRS. GAMWELL, ON HER RETURN WITH MY FORTIFYING LIBATION, WILL KNOW OF LOCAL ROOMS AVAILABLE.
PLEASE BE SEATED.

MR. LOVECRAFT... HOWARD... I HAVE TO SAY THAT YOUR LIBRARY IS ASTONISHING.
ALL THESE CLASSICAL AUTHORS LIKE PLUTARCH AND HERODOTUS. YOURS MAKES MY OWN COLLECTION LOOK MINUTE AND NARROW-MINDED.
OH, MOST OF THESE WERE INHERITED FROM WHIPPLE PHILLIPS, MY MATERNAL GRANDFATHER.
AFTER FATHER'S DEATH, HE PROVIDED FOR MOTHER AND I.
YOUR, UM, YOUR AUNT SAID THAT YOUR MOTHER WAS IN THE HOSPITAL. I-I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT YOUR FATHER HAD PASSED AWAY...
YES. WHEN I WAS FIVE YEARS OLD, FROM FATIGUE AGGRAVATED BY HIS EMPLOYMENT AS A SALESMAN.
MY MOTHER IS CURRENTLY AT THE SAME INSTITUTION. ACTUALLY, I'D PLANNED TO VISIT HER THERE LATER.
UH... SURE. SO, YOUR GRANDFATHER, IS HE STILL...?
NO. I'M AFRAID HE EXPIRED IN 1904 WHEN I WAS FOURTEEN, COMPELLING MOTHER AND I TO RELOCATE TO THIS MORE FRUGAL ACCOMMODATION.
OF THE VARIOUS 'OLD UNS' WHO RAISED ME, HE WAS FOREMOST.
I REMEMBER HE'D TERRIFY ME WITH MARVELLOUSLY GOTHIC YARNS FROM LOCAL FOLKLORE...
UH, THAT'S WHAT I'M CHIEFLY INTERESTED IN. I DON'T SUPPOSE HE EVER MENTIONED AN ORDER CALLED THE *STELLA SAPIENTE?*
I DON'T BELIEVE SO... ALTHOUGH BEING A PROMINENT FREEMASON, HE MAY HAVE DONE.
AH! MY CUP-BEARING MAIDEN IS RETURNED.
OH, YOU AND YOUR NONSENSE. SHALL I SET THIS ON THE WRITING TABLE?

PLEASE DO. MY ERRANT SON ROBERTUS INFORMS ME HE IS WITHOUT RESIDENCE. MIGHT YOU KNOW OF SOME HAVEN, SUITABLY PRICED?
WELL, I'M TOLD THERE'S ROOMS IN COLLEGE STREET, AT NUMBER SIXTY-SIX, THAT NICE HOUSE WHERE I KNOW THE PEOPLE.
IF YOU'RE VISITING YOUR MOTHER LATER, YOU COULD CALL THERE ON YOUR WAY...
THERE STANDS THE FOND ELYSIUM OF MY BOYHOOD, NUMBER FOUR-FIVE-FOUR. ITS LOSS WAS COMPARABLE TO THAT OF MY GRANDFATHER.
AFTER WE'D MOVED, I RETURNED WITH MY FRIENDS FOR REHEARSALS OF OUR SUPPOSED 'MILITARY BAND'. I MYSELF PLAYED A ZOBO KAZOO.
HA! I CAN IMAGINE. HOWARD, YOU CLEARLY LOVE THIS CITY...
DO YOU THINK LIVING HERE PREDISPOSES YOU TO CREATE YOUR WEIRD STORIES?
WELL, ROBERTUS, WHILE I STRIVE TO CAPTURE CERTAIN LOCAL *ATMOSPHERES*, ANY WEIRDNESS SPRINGS FROM MY OWN FANCY.
INDEED, WITH SUCH HORRORS SEEMINGLY BEING AN ACQUIRED TASTE, I'VE LATELY CONSIDERED PURSUING MORE *COMEDIC* AVENUES.
A RECENT TRIFLE, 'SWEET ERMENGARDE', HAS PROVEN POPULAR...

I-I'M SURE IT'S TERRIFIC, BUT TALES LIKE 'BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP' ARE ACTUALLY *VISIONARY*.
AH. THAT'S BROWN'S UNIVERSITY, ISN'T IT? DID YOU ATTEND IT AFTER YOU GRADUATED?
UM... NO. NO, MY PHYSIOLOGICAL FRAILTY PREVENTED ME FROM SO DOING.
BUT HERE WE ARE IN COLLEGE STREET! LET US HASTEN TO PROCURE YOUR LODGINGS...
...COME WITH MRS. GAMWELL'S RECOMMENDATION, IF THE RATES ARE AGREEABLE TO YOU THEN THE ROOM'S YOURS, MR. BLACK.
OH, THE RATES SOUND JUST FINE. MY STAY IN PROVIDENCE IS LOOKING LIKE THE HIGH POINT OF MY NEW ENGLAND TOUR...
MR. BLACK'S HERE FROM NEW YORK, TO WRITE OF OUR FANTASTIC ANTIQUE CUSTOMS.
IS THAT A FACT? WELL, HE'LL FIND NOTHING THAT'S FANTASTIC HERE, 'LESS IT FINDS HIM.
OH, THIS IS JUST IDEAL. I ALREADY FEEL AS THOUGH I FIT IN LIKE PART OF THE FURNITURE...
I MUST SAY, THIS WESTERN PROSPECT OF FEDERAL HILL AND THE LOWER TOWN IS REMARKABLE.
CANDIDLY, I'M RATHER ENVIOUS.

IF IT'S TO YOUR LIKING, YOU CAN LEAVE YOUR LUGGAGE HERE WHILE YOU CARRY ON WITH YOUR STROLL.
GOING UP TO VISIT MRS. GAMWELL'S SISTER AT THE BUTLER, DIDN'T YOU SAY?
THAT'S RIGHT. AND I'LL BET I COULDN'T HAVE A BETTER GUIDE TO THIS PLACE AND ITS HISTORY THAN MR. LOVECRAFT HERE...
OH, I FEAR YOU FLATTER AN OLD MAN IN HIS DECREPITUDE.
I AM BUT AN UNLETTERED AUTODIDACT... THOUGH I FANCY I KNOW THIS ENVIRONS SERVICEABLY WELL.
PERHAPS BETTER THAN MOST, AT LEAST IN ITS HOROLOGICAL EXTREMES.
MY MEANDERINGS ARE OFTEN NOCTURNAL, THOUGH THERE ARE MOMENTS:
WHEN THE LONG, LAST LIGHTS BURNISH AN ANCIENT STONE WALL...
...AND PROVIDENCE HESITATES ON THE VERY CUSP OF ANOTHER
WORLD THAN
THIS

THERE! A VERY SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION TO A MILD NOVEMBER DAY ON WHICH THE COLD DOES NOT INDISPOSE ME.
IF WE WALK BACK TO ANGELL STREET, IT WILL TAKE US UP TO BUTLER AVENUE...
IT'S GOOD OF YOU TO VISIT YOUR MOTHER. HOWARD, YOU SEEM SO ENERGETIC. IS YOUR ILLNESS CURRENTLY IN REMISSION?
HM. NOW YOU MENTION IT, I HAVE BEEN FEELING SOMEWHAT IMPROVED THESE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS, THOUGH I'M DEUCED IF I KNOW WHY.
AS FOR MOTHER, I'M ASHAMED TO SAY MY MINISTRATIONS ARE INFREQUENT.
OUR EXCURSION TODAY IS OCCASIONED BY HAVING YOU PRESENT TO ALLEVIATE MY BURDEN.
HOW LONG HAS SHE BEEN ILL?
IT'S RATHER DIFFICULT TO SAY. MY GRANDFATHER FELT SHE'D ALWAYS BEEN HIGHLY STRUNG, BUT NOT UNTIL LAST MARCH WAS SHE HOSPITALIZED.
SHE'D APPARENTLY REPORTED SEEING HIDEOUS CREATURES... ALTHOUGH NOT TO ME.
THAT SOUNDS TERRIBLY DISTRESSING.
PERHAPS YOUR FATHER'S AND GRANDFATHER'S DEATHS PUT HER UNDER A LOT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL STRAIN?

WELL, GRANDFATHER'S DEMISE CERTAINLY DID, WITH ITS CONCURRENT REDUCTION IN OUR FORTUNES.
I MUST CONFESS, I KNOW LITTLE OF HER RELATIONSHIP WITH FATHER.
I GATHER HE WAS AN ASSOCIATE OF MY GRANDFATHER'S. THEY'D MET WHEN FATHER WAS A BLACKSMITH, BEFORE BECOMING A TRADESMAN IN GOLD AND SILVER.
AND HE MET YOUR MOTHER THEN?
OH, NO. THEY SEEM TO HAVE MET AND MARRIED RATHER HURRIEDLY IN 1889, JUST OVER A YEAR BEFORE MY OWN NATIVITY.
NOW, THERE ON OUR RIGHT, STRETCHING TO THE MAJESTIC SEEKONK WE HAVE BLACKSTONE PARK, WHICH THE MUNROE BROTHERS AND I NAMED OUR MILITARY BAND AFTER.
IT'S BEAUTIFUL. SO YOU'RE NOT THIRTY?
AS MEN RECKON SUCH THINGS, PERHAPS, THOUGH SO INFIRM IS HE THAT YOUR GRANDFATHER THEOBALDUS DEMANDS THE RESPECT DUE TO THE ELDERLY.
AH! GROTTO AVENUE. WERE YOU AWARE THAT IT IS FROM THE EMPEROR NERO'S GROTTO, DECORATED WITH FAUNS AND CHIMERAS, THAT WE DERIVE THE WORD 'GROTESQUE'?
THE HOSPITAL'S UP LINCOLN AVENUE AHEAD...
HOWARD, YOU'RE SUCH DELIGHTFUL COMPANY IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE YOU'RE THE SAME MAN WHO INVENTED THE MONSTROUS MR. *SLAADER*...
OH, YOU SHOULD READ *DAGON*. THAT'S CERTAINLY SENDING A SHUDDER THROUGH AMATEURDOM, THOUGH BASED ONLY ON ONE OF MY *DREAMS*.
WELL, WE'VE REACHED OUR DESTINATION. I'LL HAVE MOTHER COME OUT AND MEET ME.

IT'S AT HER INSISTENCE. AN ACUTE EMBARRASSMENT AT THE OTHER INMATES' BEHAVIOUR, I EXPECT. FRANKLY, I FIND THE ARRANGEMENT RATHER A *RELIEF.*
I HATE TO THINK OF FATHER'S YEARS HERE, PARALYSED AND UNABLE TO MOVE...
PARALYSIS? BUT WHY WAS A PHYSICAL CONDITION LIKE THAT BEING TREATED AT A HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE?
IT'S PUZZLING, I'LL ADMIT. I CAN ONLY IMAGINE NERVOUS ORIGINS FOR THE DISORDER, BROUGHT ON BY HIS TOIL FOR GORHAM'S THE SILVERSMITHS.
THAT AT LEAST WAS MOTHER'S OPINION. SHE... AH! A VERY GOOD DAY TO YOU, SISTER.
WHY, MR. LOVECRAFT. ARE WE HERE TO VISIT YOUNG MISS SUSAN AGAIN?
I'LL BRING HER OUT.
SPLENDID! I SHALL AWAIT HER EXIT.
ROBERTUS, MY DEAR FELLOW, MIGHT I ASK THAT YOU RETIRE TO A DISCREET REMOVE?
IT'S JUST THAT MY MOTHER'S BEHAVIOUR CAN BE UPSETTING FOR THOSE UNFAMILIAR WITH HER.
HOWARD, OF COURSE. I COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND. I'LL GO AND LOITER BENEATH THOSE TREES UNTIL YOU'RE DONE.

MY YOUNG DAUGHTER! HOW RADIANT YOU LOOK!
WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE?
DO YOU THINK YOU CAN REDEEM *YOURSELF?*
NOW, SUSAN, SPEAK NICELY...
AH, NURSE, I AM COGNIZANT OF THIS FILLY'S SPIRITED DECLARATIONS...
WHY? WHY MUST YOU TALK LIKE THAT? ARE YOU ANOTHER ENGLISHMAN?
OH, I CANNOT BEAR TO SEE YOU. YOU ARE *HIDEOUS*. YOU ARE A *MONSTER.*
MOTHER...
YOU ARE *THEIR* MONSTER!
WHEN HE GOT YOU ON ME, HIS HEAD WAS A BALL OF *LIGHT!* I WAS GIVEN NO *CHOICE*...
SUSAN, IF YOU AREN'T NICE TO THEM, VISITORS WON'T *COME*...

OH, NO! BUT THE FLAPPERS AND THE WRIGGLERS, THEY'LL STILL COME, WON'T THEY?
GO AWAY, WINFIELD! I CAN SMELL THEIR SWEAT ON YOU!
SUSAN, THIS IS YOUR SON, NOT YOUR LATE HUSBAND.
MR. LOVECRAFT, PERHAPS I'D BEST GET HER INSIDE...
OF COURSE. I-I'LL BE IN TOUCH.
NOW LOOK! YOU'VE EXCITED THEM! THEY'RE ALL AROUND YOU!
SUSAN, DEAR, THAT'S ENOUGH.
WE'RE GOING TO TAKE YOU TO THE WARD AND FIND YOUR MEDICINE...
IS, UH, IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?
OH, YES. ACCEPTABLY SO. MOTHER IS A LITTLE OUT OF SORTS AND NEEDED RETURNING TO HER WARD.
I TRUST I'VE NOT DISCOMFITED YOU WITH MY ABSENCE?
THEY'RE IN YOUR MOUTH! THEY'RE SWIMMING IN YOUR HEART!
Y-YOUR MOTHER IS A LOVELY WOMAN. SHE HAS A LUMINOSITY...
WHO IS THAT? IS HE THE ONE STIRRING THEM UP?
YES. I BELIEVE SHE ONCE WHITENED HER SKIN WITH ARSENIC WHEN THAT WAS THE FASHION AMONG HER SET.
AFTER GRANDFATHER'S DEATH IT WAS DIFFICULT. WE WERE ISOLATED TOGETHER AT OUR NEW, SMALLER HOUSE...

...AND THIS WAS OF COURSE IN MY EIGHTEENTH YEAR, WHEN MY ANIMAL PREOCCUPATIONS WERE AT THEIR REGRETTABLE PINNACLE.
Grace Church Cemetery
Providence

October 31st

It's a peculiar Friday night here at the Vendome, and I must confess that I'm at something of a loose end, Randall being out of town again and visiting associates until sometime next week. I spent a few enjoyable mornings and afternoons at his place down on F Street in the week after our momentous trip to see Dunsany at the Copley Plaza, just listening to his astounding anecdotes and learning more about this fascinating network of amateur publications that he's introduced me to. I know it's getting away from my research on the Stella Sapiente for a while, but maybe that's not such a bad thing. Randall promised that he'd show me something called The Vagrant when I meet with him next week, assuming its amateur publisher has issued it by then, which promises a never-before-seen short story by my new acquaintance Howard Lovecraft. I can hardly wait! I'm planning to depart from Boston on the 14th of next month — by train; my tickets are already booked — to take up Lovecraft on his offer of a visit to his home in Providence. In the meantime, though, I'm sort of stuck here in my room without a lot to do, which is apparently just what it takes for me to make an entry in this commonplace book that I've been neglecting during all my days with Randall.

Tonight, obviously, is Halloween, and when I was out for a walk earlier I saw a few groups of children wearing home-made costumes and some [redacted] papier-mâché masks parading mournfully from house to house through the descending twilight. Actually, (and this might well be due to my recent occult preoccupations) there was something quite unsettling about the two or three eerie processions that I witnessed, although not because they looked like ghosts or witches. Quite the opposite: whether because of failing light or the poor quality of costume manufacture or some mix of both these things, it was impossible to tell what the majority of these tiny grotesques were meant to be, though at the same time it was evident that they were meant to be something specific. The effect was much more 'supernatural' than if they had been recognizable as standard spooks, as if what I were seeing was the folklore of some foreign land, or some cultish behaviour from a tradition that I'd never previously heard of. I know that I'm not explaining it particularly well, but if I'd seen a pointed witch's hat made out of card or an old bed-sheet that had holes cut into it for eyes, I would have just chuckled appreciatively because that would have been ideas of the supernatural

that I'm familiar with and to which my responses are ingrained and well-rehearsed. These crowds of stunted, shuffling apparitions, though, with their unfathomable homemade monstrosity, were somehow much, much worse. It strikes me that most modern stories of the supernatural, for all that their professed aim is to terrify, are in fact being reassuring in their choice of horrors, with crones cackling at their cauldrons or chain-rattling spectres being so well-known as to be almost comforting in their inclusion. If an author truly aimed to scare his readership, he ought to take the time to invent new creatures and concepts that his audience have never hitherto encountered, and to which they have no prior conception of how to react. I feel that more originality would go some way to capturing the sense of something alien and inexplicable that surely must be at the heart of any so-called supernatural experience. Thinking about it – and there isn't a lot else to do this evening – even more exotic fiends like Stoker's Dracula are relatively reassuring in that they're so thoroughly explained, with all their strengths and weaknesses conforming to some rational design which, once it's understood, can be exploited to defeat the menace: once you know that vampires have to sleep during the daylight hours or that they can't cross running water, etc., etc., then destroying them becomes an exercise in rationality and tactics, which immediately dispels any genuine aura of the "supernatural", where the most frightening thing is that the phenomena are not contained by rationality, or at least not by any order of rationality that human beings are capable of comprehending. A really effective supernatural literary creation wouldn't terrify because of merely physical outrages it could perpetrate, like sucking blood or other methods of bodily harm. A genuine terror would be one where even knowing such a thing existed would be quite enough to drive an ordinary person into absolute and irrecoverable insanity.

You know, re-reading the above I think there are some useful critical insights there. It also strikes me just how much my position on such things has been affected by my recent subjective experiences, even though they were hypnotic trances or hallucinations rather than real supernatural occurrences. I think that coming through my nervous breakdown (or whatever you might call the state that I've been in since Lily died) has given me a sort of glimpse into what supernatural events might feel like if they happened in the real world, to an ordinary modern person. This should serve me just swell when I buckle down and knock my Marblehead book into some kind of a serviceable shape, with plot and characters and a denouement. It occurs to me that maybe I could use the vague uneasiness

that I experienced on witnessing those children earlier as a means by which my protagonist (whoever he might be) could find himself drawn into the supernatural events or grand occult conspiracy or whatever I decide on as the novel's major plot device. Perhaps it's witnessing such an ambiguous parade of unfamiliar little creatures slinking through the falling dusk that first awakes the character's interest in how a (relatively speaking) newborn culture like America will unavoidably evolve its own peculiar folklore and mythologies, just like its Asian, African and European predecessors. Actually, this feels like a promising line of speculation.

I mean, that's really quite an interesting idea, isn't it? All countries and all cultures, in the first few centuries that follow their inception, seem to naturally produce their individual supernatural mythologies and webs of folkloric belief. This much we can deduce by looking at existing modern nations and their ancient histories, although those cultures formed so long ago that we can only guess at all the processes that might have been involved. America, however, has less than two hundred years of history and could be seen as going through its first formative period right now, allowing us a unique opportunity to watch those processes in operation. Obviously, there'll be remnants of existing folklore from the Indians who were this land's original inhabitants, and there'll be all the myths and articles of faith and superstitions brought here by the colonists of many nations, but if and when a uniquely American mythology develops, out of the rational and scientific times that we are passing through, then what might it be like? I can scarcely imagine it, but it would have to contain gods and devils as vast as the towers of New York; as monstrously complex and pungent and physical as a slum district in Brooklyn; as old and incongruous as the vast system of tunnels that underlies Boston right here where I'm sitting; as modern and startling as Einstein's ideas, or Duchamp's nude descending a staircase, or Broadway's electrical river of light after sundown. I can almost visualise it, something with as many eyes as there are windows in a city and a soul just as unreadable as that of those immense concrete perspectives... boy! I certainly seem to be in fine imaginative form tonight, although the above outburst would appear to have exhausted me. Maybe I'll read a little more from Lord Dunsany's The Gods of Pegāna, generously loaned to me by Randall, then turn in. I sure am looking forward to when he gets back next week, and hope he has that Vagrant thing to show me.

November 10th

Well, Randall's been back for around a week, which accounts for the absence of entries in this commonplace book – I've been having far too good a time investigating his collection of occult and literary antiquities, along with talking to him about writing, to get any of it done myself! Oh, and The Vagrant isn't out yet, seemingly, or even if it is, Carver is yet to get his copy through the mail. Ah, well. It's not as if there haven't been plenty of other fascinating items to distract me. Randall showed me a fantastically obscure old book, in French, concerning legends of the South Pacific islands. Though my French is almost non-existent, (Lily always used to nag me about that, because of course she spoke it fluently) I was able to enjoy the illustrations, if "enjoy" is actually the right word in the circumstances. One of them, a line engraving that particularly caught my eye, showed some kind of grotesque aquatic deity or spirit, sat on a fantastic throne that seemed to be assembled from suggestively enormous shells, beautifully decorated with the gaping jaws of sharks and corkscrew narwhal horns. The enthroned creature, hideously humanoid while also reminiscent of some huge bipedal frog or toad, caught my attention not because of its loathsome appearance (although that was bad enough) but more because of the unusual crown that the monstrosity was shown as wearing. I had to squint at this for a few minutes before I remembered why, despite its alien qualities, I had the feeling that I'd seen headgear like this before somewhere. It struck me suddenly that I had seen an artefact almost identical to the strange crown depicted in the illustration, fashioned from what looked like gold and resting on an upper shelf at Tobit Boggs' refinery in Salem. It was when he'd left me sitting on my own while he showed Mr. Annesley and Mr. Orne off of the premises. Thinking about it logically, Mr. Boggs told me that a sizeable amount of South Sea island immigrants arrived in Salem in the 19th century, and so I guess it isn't so surprising that some of them might well have brought fetishes or talismans from home with them, including that peculiar reproduction of the ceremonial crown worn by the monster in the picture – maybe it's a god of fishermen or river-god of some sort? So although it was the crown that made me first take notice of the picture, that doesn't explain my lingering sense of nagging unease with regard to it. It might be that the creature in the illustration, with its wide gash of a mouth and far-spaced eyes, resembles a caricature of Mr. Boggs and Mr. Hillman and all of those other distinctive faces that I came to be

acquainted with in Salem, though I don't suppose that it makes any more sense as an explanation for my non-specific qualms about the image. After all, I'm sure all races naturally tend towards exaggerated versions of themselves when they create their deities.

I can't begin to list all of the other rarities and marvels Randall showed me, but the greater part of all the time we've been together has been spent in long, intense discussions of the art of writing. Most of this has concerned fine stylistic points — Randall informed me, with some admiration, of a writer who refused to use the same word twice within a single paragraph — although we've sometimes strayed into more philosophical or mystic territory. Randall, for example, expressed the opinion that the origins of so-called "magic" may lie in the advent of language and writing. He explained that the ability to record observations and to transmit thoughts to other people, often over quite substantial distances of space or time, would seem of supernatural provenance to those who did not yet possess the concept of written communication. He went on to point out that if we should for some reason remove the verbal elements of magic (grimoires, magic words, spells, incantations, curses and "angelic" languages), there's next to nothing left. Rather than using this argument to disparage magic as being no more than a pretentious form of literature, however, Randall seemed to be suggesting [redacted] that even quite ordinary, everyday commercial writing was an act of sorcery, no matter how debased, misunderstood or ineffectual, and that as such any book might harbour unforeseen and even dangerous magic consequences. When I feebly protested that this seemed to be a step too far, he countered with the great tide of religious wars and persecutions stemming from the Bible, Torah and Koran, and pointed out the multitude of advertising slogans that adorn our hoardings and street corners these days, subtly persuading us to find one product more attractive or familiar than another. I suppose that looked at like that, the mere words that are my stock in trade become a far less anodyne and harmless proposition. And of course, if we consider all the books that have in stages led me to my current situation, from Gullot's and Chambers' through to Hali's, then we have to grant some credibility to Carver's thesis; whether by employing magic or by other less contentious means, it seems that words and books, demonstrably, can change our world by changing our perception of it; can precipitate it to another state entirely. I still have an uncomfortable feeling that there's more to this last statement than I've fully taken in or comprehended, but that's pretty much as far as I can follow that particular line of inquiry, for tonight at least.

I'm paying Randall one last visit on Wednesday the 12th, in two days time, so that I get a chance to say goodbye and thank him for all of the kindness and the inspiration that he's shown me. Then, on Friday, I depart for Providence and, hopefully, the hospitality of Howard Lovecraft. In all likelihood there won't be any further entries until then.

November 13th

Just a brief note, as I'm packing for tomorrow. I saw Randall yesterday, as planned, and he was as charming and delightful as ever. He even gave me a signed copy – "To Robert, a Taliesin of tomorrow, with great affection" – of his Twilight Odyssey, and said he hoped I'd send my book to him when it was done, which of course I promised I would. After that, upon a whim I tried to track down Officer O'Brien, the good-natured copper who'd patiently escorted me to Ronnie Pitman's place when I arrived in Boston in the middle of a nervous breakdown and Police Strike riots, both at once. I had no luck at the Police Department, where I was informed that all the strikers had been relieved of their jobs and very probably would not be able to find work in law enforcement anywhere. Apparently new cops are being sworn in and they're being given, automatically, the small raise that the strikers were demanding. That doesn't seem right to me, and I'm hardly a Bolshevik. Governor Coolidge, in the meantime, seems to be playing his new credentials as a Red Scare iron man for all they're worth. I managed to track down a former colleague of O'Brien's, who's now similarly unemployed, a rather surly man called Connolly who I located at a bar in Scollay Square, drowning his sorrows or at least attempting to find a vat big enough to do so in. Persuaded by the offer of a drink or two, he told me that O'Brien hadn't been seen since the worst night of the strike, the night that I'd arrived, but that this wasn't in itself extraordinary. Many of their fellow officers, fired from their jobs and faced by the unpleasant prospect of long unemployment, had just given up and drifted out of town in search of work elsewhere, often without much or indeed any notice, and without a forwarding address. Connolly said that O'Brien's wife had been around the station asking after him as well, which the disgruntled Connolly had taken as an implication that O'Brien had jumped ship on his family as well as Boston, although once again he told me that among the ranks of jobless officers these days this was far from unusual. I'll admit that I was disappointed in O'Brien, whom I'd

thought to be a man of better character than that, though obviously as a carefree bachelor who's still in some form of employment, I can't possibly imagine how distressing it would be to have your livelihood just taken from you when you had familial responsibilities around your neck that were simply too much to handle anymore. Maybe I'd have done just what O'Brien would seem to have done, given his circumstances. Anyway, I thought that the above was all worth mentioning, although I really have to tear myself away now from this journal and attend to the remainder of my packing.

November 14th

Goodness me, what an exciting and eventful day! I'm writing this from my new room at 66, College Street, Providence, where my rather sweet landlady Mrs. Willets has just served me a delightful supper that reminds me just what good food is supposed to taste like and also reminds me what a lousy job I always do when cooking for myself. But anyway, about my day — I breakfasted real early at the Vendome before settling my bill and checking out in time to catch my train to Providence. The journey there was uneventful, and the scenery, even including all the bare November trees, was wonderful. On my arrival, though, although already half in love with Providence's old-world streets and buildings, I had the distinct impression that the local population were all staring at the obvious stranger in their midst, not necessarily with smiles of welcome. Maybe it was only my imagination, or maybe there's something in my dress or bearing marks me out as a brash young New Yorker. That was certainly the way I felt, at least; as if I was transported by an H.G. Wells device into an earlier time. Not quite a Connecticut Yankee in the court of King Arthur, but pretty close.

As luck would have it, Randall Carver had acquired for me, some weeks ago, the home address of Henry Annesley in Providence, Annesley being self-declaredly a modern member of the Stella Sapiente and therefore the first such that I've knowingly run into. Carver is acquainted with Annesley's cousin, a man by the name of Tillinghast who seemingly made local headlines when he claimed to have flown to New York from Boston in a secret airship of his own design. As Randall tells the story, this ludicrous hoax masked a tale even more incredible, which I may even have mentioned earlier in these pages. Anyway, Carver obtained the necessary address from his acquaintance, so that I could

write to Annesley and ask to meet with him. To be quite candid, the main reason that I wanted to come here to Providence was Howard Lovecraft, though an interview with Henry Annesley will help me justify the visit to myself in terms of the research that I'm supposed to be engaged in. Annesley had written me a brief note back, suggesting that we meet a little after noon in George Street close to his Benevolent Street residence, George Street being the site of Brown's University and therefore somewhat easier to find when walking from the railway station. Constantly aware of the suspicious gazes aimed my way by various passers-by, despite my (to my mind) rather innocuous appearance, I found it ironic that when I eventually encountered Annesley – he wasn't hard to spot – he had the most eccentric dress and manner, yet drew no attention whatsoever from his fellow Providentials (Is that the correct collective noun, I wonder?). Even amongst that rather drab and conservatively-clad throng, Annesley was dressed in clothing some few decades out of date, and wore a pair of utterly outrageous spectacles with lenses of a vivid violet-purple and, as I say, all without attracting the least sidelong glance from any of the other residents.

He walked me along Brown Street (I think) to his house-cum-laboratory on Benevolent, and all the way he kept up an entirely open and agreeable discussion of the Stella Sapiente and their workings that, I must confess, left me at something of a loss. He didn't really fit the picture of the sinister occult fraternity that I've been building up during my sojourn in New England, and if anything he made the order sound like some kind of small town benevolent society which while it may have occult-sounding grades and ceremonies like the Freemasons, is pretty much a mutually advantageous cohort of professionals with a few esoteric aprons and bits of philosophy thrown in to spice things up. I have to say, this would be a disastrous development for the whole concept that my proposed book is resting on, and for a while talking to Annesley I started having serious doubts as to whether I'd made too much of all this folklore business. (On a minor note, when I asked casually if he might be related to the Shadrach Annesley I met at Mr. Boggs' refinery in Salem, his reaction was peculiar. He seemed almost shocked to hear the old man mentioned, and still more surprised to learn his relative was still alive, having been told of a near-fatal lightning strike which I think Mr. Boggs may well have mentioned also. I guess that the Annesleys must be a family who don't keep in touch much.) When we reached the house in question though, I found that I was somewhat reassured: Annesley's living quarters are so filled with wires and obscure

pieces of fantastical equipment that they're like something from Verne or one of his imitators. Annesley played down the Stella Sapiente's occult nature, or perhaps it's fairer to say that he placed the order's more outre' beliefs into a context of misconstrued scientific theory, his own area of study being metaphysics and the optic sciences. The violet-purple spectacles I mentioned are apparently constructed so as to retrieve "light from the far violet frequencies", whatever they might be. This sounds a little strange, admittedly, but makes a lot more sense than the occult constructions I've been entertaining so far. It's as though the ideas that the Stella Sapiente have derived from Hali's Booke are a divergent strand of early science, much like the ancient art of alchemy that modern science has emerged from. Some of these ideas might well be nonsense, but then some of our most cherished scientific notions — like the ether, for example — also turned out to be nonsense, so perhaps it's best to keep an open mind. At any rate, although the Stella Sapiente might well turn out to be modern alchemists in only the most strictly scientific sense, I see no reason why that shouldn't work as well in terms of Marblehead.

Annesley also helped to give me a perspective on all this Redeemer business. It seems that the term "Redeemer" is simply a ceremonial title or a rank within the order, and that it's inherited the way that many English titles are. To this end there was some variety of "arranged marriage" in the 1880s, in order that the offspring could inherit the title, and there's no more to the whole affair than that. While this is a bit dull and disappointing, it casts a light on Garland Wheatley's version of the story. Were all of his grievances no more than those of somebody whose lineage has been passed over for high office, albeit in a tiny and obscure New England fraternity? And — this is a horrible thought that's just come to me — was the resentful, apparently inbred and badly deformed Willard Wheatley his family's candidate for this (I'm told) ceremonial and purely symbolic position? If that was the case, it puts the order's rejection of the Wheatleys into a more understandable and sympathetic light.

Anyway, I'd been sitting there amidst the cables and contraptions, interviewing Annesley for some short while when we were most felicitously interrupted by a younger friend of the inventor, a well-built and handsome seventeen year-old named Howard Charles whom I took to immediately. It turns out that the boy was consulting with Annesley over the fact that he'd learned of ancestral connections with Providence man Japheth Colwen, who of course is one of the three Stella Sapiente founding members! Isn't that just the most unbelievable

coincidence? To be quite honest, Annesley's sober and reasonable depiction of the order as a largely philosophical society, a bit like the Theosophists only more scientific in their thinking, had become somewhat dispiriting by then, so when young Howard offered me a tour of Providence's other Stella Sapiente sites of interest and import, including the Catholic church St. John's that I've heard mentioned in my travels, I leapt at the opportunity. While I've nothing against the older men that I've been meeting recently, I'm sure I've previously mentioned my frustration at not running into many fellows my own age or younger, and as it transpired young Howard Charles was the enchanting antidote to that unhappy situation.

He really was the sweetest company, having that mix of sudden boldness and shy hesitancy that you sometimes find in boys that age. He showed me Etienne Roulet's old house on Benefit Street, called the Babbitt House these days, apparently, while telling me about himself and seeming genuinely awestruck to be in the company of a reporter from New York, which I of course found hugely flattering and basked in shamelessly. (I've mentioned before how out-of-proportion the reaction to me has been out here. Why, even Henry Annesley said that it was quite an honour just to meet me. If this keeps up, I might just move to New England and enjoy all the attention.) After showing me the Benefit Street house, Howard agreed to walk me down to Federal Hill on the west side of Providence so he could show me St. John's Church, derelict now but formerly a Stella Sapiente meeting-place of key significance. When finally we reached it, after a considerable walk, it was a great, dark, hulking place that Howard told me was accessible by an unlocked back door, used by him and his school-friends when they'd trespassed and got up to mischief in the summer break. He showed me the way in, and from the derelict interior we mounted a long flight of stairs up to the steeple room wherein the Stella Sapiente used to gather. This was really where the fun began.

Most relevant to my researches here, in that deserted and abandoned steeple room I found the most extraordinary items, that had seemingly been left there in that ruin of a building for just anyone to find. The least of these, improbable as that might seem, was what appeared to be a facsimile copy of the Liber Stella Sapiente, the Latin translation of the original Kitab made in Toledo and published in Venice in the 1490s, from which Hali's book derived! Even a facsimile of such a rare and ancient book must have some value, surely. Why would anybody leave it in the dusty tower-room of a condemned church to just

disintegrate or be devoured by bugs? It makes no sense. Although, now that I think of it, why didn't I just take the book myself? I guess I had the feeling that it must be Stella Sapiente property and shouldn't be removed. Besides, although I don't read Latin, I remembered how my nervous breakdown into nightmarish delusion had occurred right after reading the same book in English there at the St. Anselm College library. I really didn't feel like dipping into that particular volume again, and anyway had other matters to distract me. Amongst these, most pertinent to my researches was an oddly geometric crystal form that rested in an open box atop a kind of plinth. Putting this artefact together with something that I remembered my young escort saying earlier, I came to the bewildering conclusion that this strangely manufactured-looking piece of polished stone could only be the meteorite (or, I suppose, a carved representation of the same) that struck the blighted farm I visited just outside Manchester, and which reportedly had just evaporated. Evidently, Stella Sapiente members visiting the farm in question had covertly spirited the thing from space away to Providence... or possibly the meteorite evaporated as they claimed, and what I saw in S. John's steeple was a man-made reconstruction. That would, after all, explain its manufactured look and also why such a reputedly lethally toxic thing could be left exposed in the steeple without any obvious ill effects to anyone. I left it where it was, however, for the reasons given earlier about deciding not to take the Liber Stella Sapiente. Also, by that time me and Master Charles were having such fun in each other's company – it would be quite unnecessary for me to go into all of the ins and outs of our diversions in this commonplace book, but suffice to say that it was the most thoroughly agreeable exchange with a young man that I've experienced in a long time.

Afterwards he walked me back to Benefit Street, where we both said our goodbyes. He's a sweet kid, and meeting him did me a power of good. I had quite a spring in my step as I carried on to Angell Street for my long-anticipated meeting with Howard Lovecraft, and I have to say he didn't let me down, turning out to be every bit as fascinating and eccentric as I'd judged him on our first acquaintance. Knocking at the door of number 598 a little nervously, I was surprised when it was answered by a lady in late middle-age, who subsequent conversation revealed as Lovecraft's aunt – I think he later said her name was Mrs. Gamwell. She invited me inside, somewhat reluctantly it seemed to me, and warned me that I mustn't tire Howard out as he was very ill. Talking to Lovecraft

later, he seemed to subscribe to the same viewpoint on his dreadful health, but the longer that I spend with him, the more that I'm convinced that this is just some affectation of ill health that other members of his family have encouraged him in. He's as tall as I am, and appears considerably more robust, and though he talks about nervous afflictions I doubt that he's ever been in the condition I was in, a month or two ago in Manchester. No, he's a sturdy fellow with a rather odd and yet endearing habit of pretending he's an old man from the 18th century, rather than someone who's almost exactly the same age as me. When his aunt showed me into his literary Aladdin's [redacted] Cave of a room, he referred to her as "my young granddaughter", to me as "dear Robertus", and to himself as my "Grandfather Theobald". I like the man enormously, but at the same time I have no idea what to make of him.

We talked together for a while and he told me something about his family background, which seems rather marked by upsets. Lovecraft's father, it turns out, died when Howard was only small, with Howard and his mother taken care of by her father, Mr. Whipple Phillips. This old gentleman had passed away himself when Lovecraft was only fourteen years old, and since then I got the impression Howard felt that the family had been in reduced circumstances. His mother had suffered some kind of nervous incapacitation only a few months ago, he told me, and was currently a patient at the Butler Hospital. Howard was very open about all of this, and I sensed that he saw this as his lot in life, to be borne with an admirably stoic attitude. His aunt re-entered, rather touchingly, to serve him up a glass of milk, and I was once again left with the impression of Howard as a monstrously clever and enthusiastic overgrown 11 year-old boy who, for his own peculiar amusement, is pretending to be an enfeebled uncle of Nathaniel Hawthorne or somebody of that vintage. Prompted by her nephew, his aunt recommended an address nearby – the College Street room where I'm writing now – where the landlady was a friend of Mrs. Gamwell's and was currently looking for lodgers. This, actually, was quite a stroke of luck since I'd arrived in Providence with only the vague plan of finding a hotel, which Howard tells me are prohibitively costly. As it happened, Howard had a visit to his mother at the Butler Hospital planned for this afternoon and I was able to accompany him and also to arrange my College St. accommodation on the way.

Leaving my luggage here with Mrs. Willets, Lovecraft and I carried on up Butler Avenue towards the hospital, where I stood some way off while Howard and

his mother met outside the hospital's front entrance, a state of affairs that both of them appear to find preferable, although it seems that Mrs. Lovecraft was feeling a little out of sorts today and so our visit was a short one. Though I'm sure the conversation with his ailing mother was upsetting for him, Lovecraft took it all without complaint and as we walked back through the gathering twilight his imaginative conversation was as animated as if the asylum visit hadn't happened. He quizzed me about my visit earlier to Annesley's equipment-cluttered residence (apparently Howard has noticed Annesley and his unusual spectacles while walking around Providence, although he doesn't personally know the man), and seemed particularly taken with the notion that Annesley's purple lenses were intended to "retrieve light from the far violet frequencies". He speculated that the reaches of existence beyond our human perception might support their own animal life, exotic creatures of a coloration that made them invisible to our limited senses. It was exhilarating, just to witness that extraordinary imagination going through its wondrous paces, and I once again enthused about the deep impression that "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" had made on me. Howard repeated a remark that he'd made earlier, about how in its weird effects "Beyond the Wall..." wasn't a patch on something he called "Dagon", with which I was unfamiliar. Howard explained that it had only very recently been published, and that if I cared to call by Angell Street on my way back to Mrs. Willets and my College Street accommodation, he'd be happy to loan me his contributor's copy so that I could read his offering for myself. This I agreed to eagerly, and when we called at Lovecraft's house I'm darned if what he went inside to fetch for me wasn't the issue of The Vagrant that I'd been so looking forward to since Randall Carver told me of its imminent appearance. I thanked Lovecraft (probably over-excitedly), agreed to visit him again next Monday, then said my goodnights and rushed back here to College Street, where I had time to read through Lovecraft's story twice in a row before Mrs. Willets called me down to supper.

God, but it's a minor masterpiece, although I may adjust that first evaluation somewhat once I've had a chance to get over my clear state of infatuation with the yarn. I almost want to say that it's worth rating with the best of Poe, but once again I don't quite trust my own critical faculties while I'm still in this evident condition of intoxication. The story concerns a wartime escapee from a German vessel, drifting in his rowboat for some time until he wakes to find himself in a grotesque Sargasso of some sort, a hideous expanse of mud as if a section of

the ocean bed itself had been brought to the surface by a subterranean upheaval. The uncanny atmosphere that Lovecraft conjures is so full of tactile and olfactory revulsion that the reader cannot help but think that these uncomfortably visceral reactions have been brought forth from the very center of the author's self and sensibilities. The narrator wanders lost and dumbstruck through this fetid landscape until finally he comes across a kind of carven monolith that in itself suggests all sorts of ancient horrors, as if it had been a focus for the worship of beings from long before mankind. Not long thereafter, he encounters something even worse – one of the creatures that had hewn the monolith, or else one of the monstrous things they worshipped! At the tale's conclusion, the narrator has been rescued and is recuperating in San Francisco, haunted by what he has seen and realizing that even morphine can't for long keep his nightmares at bay. The final image, of a dreadful hand upon the window ledge of the narrator's room, has stayed with me all right. At first I thought it meant that the monstrosity he'd witnessed had by some means tracked him down to San Francisco, but the more that I consider it, the more unlikely and indeed ridiculous that seems as a denouement. Having had a chance to think it through, it seems to me more likely that what Lovecraft was implying was that the main character was so unhinged by what he'd seen during his days adrift at sea that he'd been plunged into a state of madness and hallucination in which he would very likely take his own life. Actually, a further thought that's come to me just now, could the entire experience have been a dreadful mirage suffered by a man alone upon the ocean in an open boat, hungry and dehydrated without hope of rescue? In fact doesn't that make it more rather than less horrible, the idea that this kind of seemingly supernatural intrusion into everyday life could happen to anyone, at least in their mind? It certainly jibes well with my own recent half-hysterical "encounters with the supernatural", and in fact the more I think about the story, the more I'm impressed by how subtle and original it is. This is a new kind of American writing, and when I see Howard on Monday, I'm going to have to get an explanation of it from the author's mouth. In the meantime, after Mrs. Willet's supper and my other physical exertions of the day, I think I might as well call it a night.

CHAPTER 10

"Of all the distant objects on Federal Hill, a certain huge, dark church most fascinated Blake. It stood out with especial distinctness at certain hours of the day, and at sunset the great tower and tapering steeple loomed blackly against the flaming sky."

—'The Haunter Of The Dark',
November 5-9, 1935

"TO THINK THAT THOSE FEET ONCE TROD THE STEEP LANES OF PROVIDENCE.
"TO KNOW THAT THE EPITOME OF HORROR AND THE WEIRD WAS MANIFESTED IN THESE SAME STREETS THAT I WANDER DAILY...
"THIS IS HAPPINESS INDEED.
"IN FANCY I CONJECTURE THAT HE WOULD BE NEAR TO FEBRILE WITH EXCITEMENT AND ANTICIPATION.
"THAT BALLOONING BROW, BEHIND WHICH TEEMED TORTURE AND PLAGUE AND SUFFOCATION, POSSIBLY BEDIZENED WITH A PERSPIRATORY HAZE.
"AND ALL OF IT, THE COMING FORTH AMIDST THESE MORBID STONES, WAS BORN OF A COMPULSION FOR THE CONVERSATION OF BUT ONE SPECIFIC WOMAN.
"MORE THAN MOST, I AM NOT COMPETENT TO SPECULATE UPON THOSE YEARNINGS, NOR THOSE EXPECTATIONS.
"AND WE CANNOT KNOW THE BALANCES OF SUCH A MONUMENTAL BEING'S HEART."
YLYL YR NHHNGR.
NOW IS BEFORE.

STILL LESS THE INNER WORKINGS OF THE ESTEEMED MR. POE...
...OR FOR THAT MATTER, ANY OTHER HUMAN MIND.
X: THE HAUNTED PALACE

SO MR. POE PASSED THROUGH HERE WHEN HE WAS WOOING THE MRS. WHITMAN WHOSE HOUSE YOU SHOWED ME.
WHAT AN AUTHOR! HIS STORIES ARE SO *INTOXICATING* THAT I DON'T CARE WHERE OR WHEN THEY'RE MEANT TO BE OCCURRING.
QUITE. THERE IS AN AMBIGUITY OF SETTING THAT IS ALMOST *DREAMLIKE*, THOUGH ENTIRELY UNLIKE DUNSANY.
WELL, *HIS* WORLD IS MORE AN INVENTED MYTHOLOGY.
INCIDENTALLY, I WAS ASTONISHED BY THAT 'WHITE SHIP' STORY YOU SHOWED ME. AND IT WAS WRITTEN *BEFORE* YOU'D READ DUNSANY?
YES, THOUGH ONLY BY A WEEK. MERELY PERUSING *TITLES* OF HIS HAD INSPIRED ME.
SHALL WE JOURNEY BACK? THIS DECEMBER CHILL ENERVATES ME CONSIDERABLY.
OF COURSE.
DISCOVERING DUNSANY MUST HAVE BEEN LIKE FINDING A KINDRED *SPIRIT*.
OH, UNDENIABLY. SOMETIMES I FEEL THAT NOBLE PLUNKETT IS EXACTLY MY OWN SELF, IN ALL PARTICULARS.
AND YET, ENTICING AS HIS DREAM-WORLDS ARE, I FIND MYSELF INCREASINGLY DRAWN TO A CERTAIN *REALISM* IN FANTASY AS, SOMETIMES, DOES MR. POE.
HM. I SUPPOSE THERE ARE THOSE TALES WHICH POE FASHIONED AFTER LIFE, LIKE HIS MARIE ROGET STORY...
INDEED. AND THEN THERE ARE HIS *HOAXES*, LIKE 'THE GOLD BUG', THAT HE FIRST PRESENTED AS NEWS STORIES.
THAT APPROACH INTRIGUES ME. I HAVE EVEN TAKEN INSPIRATION FROM YOUR *OWN* WORK, YOUNG ROBERTUS.

MY WORK? HOWARD, THAT'S AWFULLY FLATTERING, BUT YOU CAN'T MEAN THE COMMONPLACE BOOK I LOANED YOU?
WELL, NOT SO MUCH YOUR EXCELLENT STORY IDEAS AS THE WEIRD MOODS EXCITED BY YOUR DIARY ENTRIES.
BEFORE READING YOUR UNEARTHLY IMPRESSIONS OF NEW ENGLAND, I'D NOT CONSIDERED MY NATIVE SOIL A SUITABLE BACKDROP FOR THE FANTASTICAL.
YOU... HOWARD, IS THIS A JOKE?
EMPHATICALLY NOT. NO ONE APPRECIATES IT WHEN I DO THAT.
NO, I'VE ALREADY MISAPPROPRIATED THE ANECDOTES ABOUT MEETING MR. ANNESLEY ON YOUR ARRIVAL LAST MONTH.
A TRIFLING TALE I PENNED ONLY RECENTLY. NATURALLY, I REPLACED ANNESLEY'S NAME WITH THAT OF HIS COUSIN TILLINGHAST, BOTH COMMON LOCAL APPELLATIONS.
I-I'M HONORED. YOU MEAN THE MATERIAL ABOUT VISITING HIS LABORATORY?
OH, MONSTROUSLY EMBELLISHED, I ASSURE YOU. YET IT IS THE YARN'S SETTING WHICH MOST ENTHUSES ME.
THOUGH I HAVE NOT NAMED IT SO, IT IS HERE. IT IS PROVIDENCE!
I HAVE EVEN MENTIONED HIS ADDRESS AS BEING ON BENEVOLENT STREET. IT'S ALL SPLENDID FUN.
BOY. KNOWING I'VE MADE A CONTRIBUTION REALLY PEPS ME UP.
PLEASE FEEL FREE TO USE ANY IDEAS YOU FIND IN THERE.
WELL, I'D HAVE TO ALTER SOME NAMES AND PLACES, BUT I...
WHY, MR. BLACK. HOW FORTUNATE AS I SHOULD MEET WITH YOU AGAIN.

H-HOWARD? HOWARD CHARLES? I-I'M SORRY. YOU JUST LOOK DIFFERENT TO WHEN I LAST SAW YOU.
HOWARD, THIS IS... WELL, UH, THIS IS HOWARD TOO, MY FRIEND MR. LOVECRAFT. GEE, THIS IS SUCH A SURPRISE...
I'M VERY PLEASED TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, MR. CHARLES.
AND I YOURS, SIR, YOU MAY DEPEND UPON IT.
AS FOR ANY DIFFERENCE TO ME, IT'S MY HOPE THAT I AM MORE A GROWN MAN SINCE OUR LAST ENCOUNTER, AKIN TO MY ILLUSTRIOUS FOREBEAR.
UH... YES, HOWARD HERE IS DESCENDED FROM THE SALEM SHIPPING MAGNATE JAPHETH COLWEN, LATER OF PROVIDENCE.
INDEED? HOW INTERESTING.
OH, YES. IT'S OF CONSUMING INTEREST. MR. ANNESLEY HAS TOLD ME MUCH OF MY ANCESTOR AND HIS ESSENTIAL NATURE.
HE'S MEETING ME PRESENTLY AT OUR SANCTUARY HERE TO DISCUSS THE FESTIVAL JUST PASSED...
WELL, CHRISTMAS IS A BUSY TIME. ACTUALLY, WE SHOULD BE HEADING ON. TAKE CARE, HOWARD.
QUITE. GOOD DAY, SIR.
WHY, THANK YOU KINDLY.
AND A VERY GOOD EVENING TO YOU TWO GENTLEMEN, AS WELL.

HM. I'M, UM, I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT. H-HE'S THE YOUNGSTER I MET AT ANNESLEY'S, WHO SHOWED ME THE OTHER ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.
HE'S REALLY CHANGED. HOW HE TALKS, HOW HE DRESSES. EVEN SMOKING THAT PIPE...
OH, IT'S SOMETHING BOYS DO TO ASSERT THEIR MANHOOD.
BUT WE WERE TALKING OF YOUR COMMONPLACE BOOK.
I'D HEARD OF SUCH THINGS, BUT NEVER PREVIOUSLY SEEN ONE. I'VE RESOLVED TO SECURE SUCH A TOME MYSELF.
SOME OF YOUR NOTES INVITE BOUNDLESS SPECULATION. THE NAME HALI, FOR EXAMPLE, IS REFERRED TO BY MY RECENT DISCOVERY MR. BIERCE.
AMBROSE BIERCE? REALLY? I THOUGHT I REMEMBERED IT BEING MENTIONED IN ROBERT CHAMBERS' WORK.
CHAMBERS THE ROMANCE WRITER? I WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT SO.
BIERCE DESCRIBES HALI AS A PROPHET, WHICH SEEMS CONGRUENT WITH YOUR MAD ARAB, KHĀLID IBN YAZĪD.
I THINK IN CHAMBERS, HALI IS A LAKE OR SOMETHING.
YOU KNOW, I WOULDN'T DISMISS HIS WORK. THE KING IN YELLOW, AT LEAST, IS GENUINELY STRANGE STUFF.
THEN I SHALL ENDEAVOUR TO DIP INTO IT AT SOME POINT.
YOU KNOW, YOUNG ROBERTUS, YOUR VISIT HAS ENLIVENED OLD GRANDFATHER THEOBALD TREMENDOUSLY. YOU'VE REVEALED ASPECTS OF PROVIDENCE PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN TO ME.
IN FACT, I'VE MADE ADMIRING MENTION OF YOU TO SOME OF MY OTHER SONS AND CORRESPONDENTS.
OF ME? SERIOUSLY?

WHY, YES. CHIEFLY I'VE SPOKEN OF YOU IN MY LETTERS TO LOVEMAN, DEAR SAMUELUS.
YOU MAY RECALL HIS 'HERMAPHRODITE' POEM THAT I SHOWED YOU. THERE IS A QUALITY IN LOVEMAN'S BEARING WHICH RECALLS YOUR OWN.
YOU'RE EACH AN ADONIS...
I-I REMEMBER. THE POEM ABOUT LOVING OTHER MEN. I-I'D MEANT TO ASK ABOUT HIM...
OH, HE KEEPS EPICENE COMPANY TO BE SURE.
I AM CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT SAMUELUS CLEAVES TO A PLATONIC IDEAL IN SUCH MATTERS, RATHER THAN DEBASE HIMSELF WITH LOATHSOME ACTUALITY.
I HAVE HEARD MUCH OF SUCH HORTICULTURAL SPECIMENS THAT SEEM TO FLOURISH IN NEW YORK, PRESUMABLY A STOMACH-TURNING SPECTACLE.
UH... Y-YES. DISGUSTING.
YET IN LOVEMAN, I'M SURE THESE PROCLIVITIES REMAIN UNACTED. WERE IT OTHERWISE, HOW COULD HE PEN SUCH MEMORABLE POETRY?
IN SAMUELUS WE SEE ONE VALIANTLY OVERCOMING HIS ANIMAL NATURE TO CREATE ENDURING VERSE.
ALL THE MORE REMARKABLE WHEN ONE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT LOVEMAN, THOUGH EXCEPTIONAL TO THAT UNLIKEABLE TRIBE, IS A JEW.
I-I SEE.
BUT WE AT LAST ARE HOME, UNBURDENED OF THE COLD AND THE INFERNAL CHRISTMAS CHEER.
LET US RETIRE TO SOMEWHERE WARMER, THAT IS MORE AMENABLE TO CIVILISED DEBATE.

THERE. NOW WE ARE ONCE MORE AT EASE, I MAY RETURN YOUR MOST UNCOMMON COMMONPLACE BOOK.
YOUR OBSERVATIONS ELICIT SUCH PHANTASMAGORIC NOTIONS, THAT WHO KNOWS WHAT ABNORMALITIES I SHALL CONCOCT?
HM. WELL, THANKS. I'M GLAD YOU FOUND MY WRITINGS... MEMORABLE.
I HOPE MY INCIDENTAL IDEAS ARE OF SOME USE TO YOU.
WHY, THE ARAB BOOK ALONE IS PRICELESS, WITH ITS CIPHERS AND PORTENTS. I'D GIVE IT A LESS CUMBERSOME TITLE, OBVIOUSLY.
AS FOR AN AUTHOR, AS A BOY I DEVISED AN ARABESQUE PLAY-NAME THAT MIGHT SUFFICE...
YOUR CHILDHOOD'S IMPORTANT TO YOU, ISN'T IT? IT'S MADE YOU WHAT YOU ARE, I GUESS.

OH, ASSUREDLY. I'VE ALWAYS FELT THAT ONE'S BACKGROUND AND LINEAGE IMPART A FORM OF *DESTINY*.
AS FOR YOUR OLD GRANDFATHER'S TENDER YOUTH, THERE IS A PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE HERE WHICH MAY PROVIDE *AMUSEMENT*.
YOU MUST PROMISE ME, HOWEVER, NOT TO LAUGH...
OH, I DOUBT I'LL EVEN CRACK A *SMILE*.
I WOULD ADVISE, ROBERTUS, THAT YOU MAKE NO UTTERANCE BEFORE YOU KNOW WHEREOF YOU SPEAK.
BEHOLD, THE LARVAL STAGE OF THE SENESCENT LEPIDOPTERON THAT STANDS, ALBEIT FEEBLY, HERE TODAY.
WELL, I RECOGNISE YOUR MOTHER, AND...
MY GOD. IS THAT YOU? YOU LOOK LIKE... WELL...
...A PRECOCIOUS FAUNTLEROY? I RATHER FEAR SO, THOUGH MY APPEARANCE WAS MOTHER'S IDEA.
IT WAS A FASHION BACK THEN. RARE, PERHAPS, BUT NOT UNHEARD OF.
I CONFESS IT TOOK SOME TIME FOR ME TO ACQUIRE THE HABIT OF *TROUSERS*.
YES. YES, I CAN SEE IT MIGHT. AND THIS MAN... THIS IS YOUR FATHER?
IT IS INDEED. WINFIELD SCOTT LOVECRAFT, A TRUE SON OF MOTHER ENGLAND BORN IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK.
AND YET IS THAT A FROWN OF PUZZLEMENT THAT FLAWS THY YOUTHFUL BROW?
I... I JUST THOUGHT I RECOGNISED HIM. PROBABLY I NOTICED HIS PICTURE IN HERE BEFORE. WHY DO YOU SAY "A SON OF ENGLAND"?

"OH, FATHER WAS JUSTIFIABLY PROUD OF HIS PREDECESSORS. HE'D WARN ME, AGED TWO, NOT TO FALL INTO AMERICANISMS OF SPEECH.
"INDEED, DUE TO HIS MANNERISMS, MANY PEOPLE SUPPOSED HIM TO BE AN ENGLISHMAN.
"RATHER, I SEE HIM AS A MAN WHO UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORT OF ANCIENT TRADITION."
I HAVE A SENSE HE WAS A PROTÉGÉ OF GRANDFATHER'S, FOR I CANNOT OTHERWISE CONSTRUE HIS PRESUMED INTRODUCTION TO MY MOTHER.
IT IS POSSIBLE HE MET MY GRANDSIRE THROUGH SOME CRAFT GUILD FROM HIS BLACKSMITH DAYS, OR THROUGH FREEMASONRY.
WITHOUT DOUBT, HIS PRONOUNCEMENTS SHAPED MANY OF MY OWN PREVAILING ATTITUDES.
SO... UH... SO WHEN HE WAS A SALESMAN, WH-WHERE DID HE TRAVEL, EXACTLY?
WELL, I REALLY ONLY KNOW WHAT MOTHER TOLD ME.
HE WAS IN BOSTON FOR A TIME, BUT HIS TRADE IN GOLD AND SILVER TOOK HIM FAR AFIELD.
AS I RECALL SALEM, NEW YORK AND CHICAGO WERE ALL IN HIS ITINERARY.
DID... DID HE EVER GO TO MANCHESTER?
NOT PROFESSIONALLY... ALTHOUGH I REMEMBER GRANDFATHER SAYING FATHER HAD TRAVELLED THERE ONCE, BEFORE MY OWN NATIVITY.
BUT RETURNING TO YOUR COMMONPLACE BOOK, I'D THOUGHT SOME OF MY ELABORATIONS UPON YOUR NOTIONS MIGHT BE PASSED OFF AS DREAMS.
THAT, AT LEAST, IS MY EXCUSE FOR 'DAGON'.

"I HAVE LEARNED THAT A MAJORITY PREFER THAT THE WEIRD NOT INTRUDE UPON THE ORDERLY, PROSAIC WORLD OF THEIR SENSIBILITIES.
"SUCH IS THEIR UNEASE THAT EXPONENTS OF THE MACABRE SUCH AS POE ARE THOUGHT BOTH MORBID AND DERANGED.
"BETTER, PERHAPS, THAT THEY CONCEIVE SUCH UNSETTLING INTRUSIONS AS NO MORE THAN FLEETING *DREAMS.*"
IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT, OF COURSE, TO CREDIBLY ASSERT *LONGER* NARRATIVES AS SO DERIVED...
...ALTHOUGH THAT WHISKERY ROGUE THEOBALDUS HAS OFT CONTEMPLATED SUCH A STRATEGY, AS A POE-ESQUE *HOAX.*
YOU... YOU SEEM TO HAVE A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH *DREAMS.*
A-ALMOST AS IF THEY REPRESENT A COMPLETE OTHER *WORLD* TO YOU.
INDUBITABLY. SINCE MY FAR-OFF INFANT DAYS I HAVE BEEN BLESSED AND AFFLICTED WITH THE MOST EXTRAVAGANT NIGHTLY DELIRIUMS.
I RECALL REGULARLY ENCOUNTERING GREAT FLOCKS OF BLACK, RUBBERY, FACELESS THINGS WITH BAT-WINGS AND BARBED TAILS.
I DUBBED THEM 'NIGHTGAUNTS'. THEIR WORST CHARACTERISTIC WAS THE INSIDIOUS *TICKLING* WHEN THEY *CARRIED* ME.
A-AND THIS WAS WHEN YOU WERE SMALL, AFTER YOUR FATHER'S PASSING WHEN YOUR GRANDFATHER SUPPORTED YOU.
DID THE... THE FOLK-STORIES HE TOLD YOU. DID THEY INFLUENCE YOUR DREAMS?
I'M SURE THEY DID.
BEFORE YOUR OWN WRITINGS, HIS TALES FIRST INSTILLED IN ME THE SENSE OF A NEW ENGLAND HAUNTED BY MYTHIC *APPARITIONS.*

"HE'D RECOUNT TALES OF THE THINGS THE SWARTHY IMMIGRANTS DID IN THE WOODS, THE GHASTLY RITUALS BROUGHT FROM THEIR HOMELANDS AND SO FORTH.
"THE DARKNESS AND SUPERSTITION IN THEIR LOWLY AND INSANITARY NEIGHBOURHOODS. THE BLASPHEMOUS CONCEPTIONS CLANDESTINELY VOICED IN SCARCELY-HUMAN TONGUES.
"THE DEPTHS TO WHICH SUCH PEOPLE MIGHT, WITH TIME, DEGENERATE."
HE SAID WERE IT NOT FOR CERTAIN FRATERNITIES, PRESUMABLY REFERRING TO THE FREEMASONS, MANKIND'S END WOULD BE LINGERING AND IGNOBLY MONGRELISED.
I HAVE A DAGUERREOTYPE LIKENESS OF HIM, IF YOU'D CARE TO SEE IT. LET ME FIRST REPLACE THIS FAMILY PORTRAIT...
H-HE WASN'T SEEN AS... WELL, OUT OF HIS WITS AT ALL?
OH NO, CERTAINLY NOT. A TOUCH ECCENTRIC, I'LL GRANT YOU, AND PRONE TO BOTH HEADACHES AND APOPLECTIC SPELLS, BUT NOT UNBALANCED.
A MAN OF REMARKABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT, HE FOUNDED THE TOWN OF GREENE AND ITS MASONIC LODGE. HE MET WITH DIGNITARIES, BISHOPS AND CONFEDERATE GENERALS.
YOU MAY JUDGE HIM YOURSELF, FROM HIS STATELY DEMEANOUR...
THERE! IS HE NOT A MOST IMPRESSIVE FELLOW?
WHIPPLE VAN BUREN PHILLIPS.
THE ESTEEMED GRANDFATHER OF YOUR ESTEEMED GRANDFATHER.

"I FEAR THAT MODERN EYES CAN SCARCE ENCOMPASS THE FULL STATURE OF SUCH INDIVIDUALS...
"...NOR EASILY CONCEIVE OF THE DYNAMIC ENERGIES REQUIRED TO BRING THEIR EFFORTS TO COMPLETION."
VAN... VAN BUREN?
AN ILLUSTRIOUS ANCESTOR ON THE RATHBUN SIDE OF MY GRANDFATHER'S FAMILY, IF MEMORY SERVES CORRECT.
MY WORD, ROBERTUS, YOU HAVE GROWN QUITE PALE. WHY, ONE MIGHT THINK YOU THE FRAIL INVALID AT DEATH'S DOOR, AND NOT I.
WITH LUCK, IT'S NO RECURRENCE OF THE INFLUENZA SEIZING PROVIDENCE A TWELVEMONTH SINCE...
I-I'M NOT... I'M JUST FEELING A LITTLE... STRANGE. I SHOULD HEAD BACK TO MY LODGINGS.
I-IN FACT, MAYBE I SHOULD HEAD BACK TO NEW YORK. I... I MAY HAVE STAYED TOO LONG ALREADY.
WHY, THIS IS MOST SUDDEN... BUT GIVEN YOUR RECENT LOSS, UNDERSTANDABLE.
WERE OUR POSITIONS REVERSED, I'D DOUBTLESS YEARN FOR PROVIDENCE.
I'M, I'M SORRY, RUNNING AWAY LIKE THIS. IT'S JUST...
I-I'M JUST...
MY DEAR FELLOW, I ASSURE YOU NO EXPLANATION IS NECESSARY.
YOUR VISIT, I SUSPECT, MAY HAVE SHAPED GRANDFATHER THEOBALD INTO THE AUTHOR HE WAS DESTINED TO BE. GOODNIGHT, ROBERTUS. A LONG, PROSPEROUS CAREER TO YOU.

FOR FORTY YEARS THEIR SALESMEN HAVE BROUGHT ME... WELL, FOLK ARTEFACTS, I SUPPOSE. I STILL REMEMBER THEIR FIRST REPRESENTATIVE, A FUNNY LITTLE ENGLISHMAN.
MIND, THE STELL SAPS THESE DAYS, YOUR WADES AND YOUR BURENS, THEY'RE TOO HIGH AND MIGHTY FOR US.
LIKE MY DADDY SAID, WE'RE ALL BORN INTO THE SAME BUCKET.
SEE, THIS SOCIETY I BELONGED TO GIVE SAINT ANSELM COLLEGE IN MANCHESTER A COPY OF THE BOOK AROUND 1890.
THAT WAS WHEN THEY WAS HAVIN' ALL THEIR BIG IDEAS.
1872
1877
THEY WANTED TO FULFIL THE REDEEMER PROPHECY IS WHAT IT WAS, AN' US POOR RELATIONS WASN'T CONSULTED. THIS WAS 1889, APPROXIMATE.

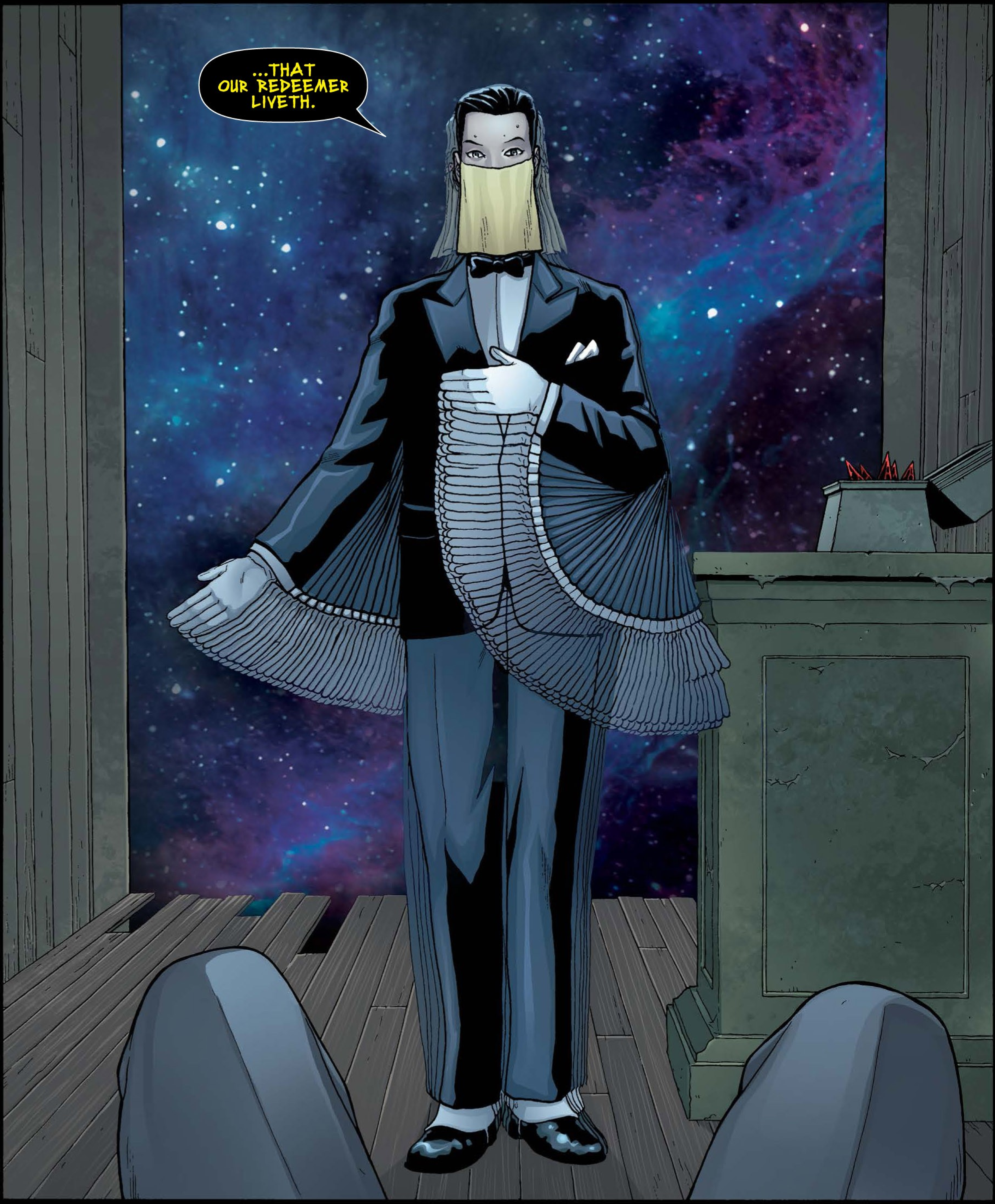
IN THUH 'DEEMER STORY, S'GOTTA BE THUH CRAZY GRANPAPPY, UN' THUH WHAHT-FACED WUMMUN, UN' THUH BAD-LOOKIN' BWOY.
HE WAS OUT HERE WITH HIS FRIENDS... THERE WAS A MR. WADE FROM SALEM, AND ANOTHER MAN, AN ENGLISH FELLER ACCORDING TO MR. FORRESTER'S ACCOUNT.
UHM, THAT'S BUREN, VAN BUREN, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
THE, UHM, THE MAN NEXT TO HIM, I THINK HIS NAME WAS WINSTON SOMETHING. ENGLISH FELLOW, TRADED IN PRECIOUS METALS.
IT'S THE, UHM, THE WORLD OF DREAMS THAT'S BEEN SUPPRESSED BY OUR REALITY. THEY, UHM, THEY WANT TO RESTORE IT.
IN 1889 THERE WAS AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE FOR REASONS OF SUCCESSION.
ALL PERFECTLY CONSENSUAL, OF COURSE. OUR ORDER-HEAD'S DAUGHTER MARRIED HIS PROTEGE, A NOVITIATE MEMBER WHOSE WORK INVOLVED METALS.
HAPPILY, THEY PRODUCED OFFSPRING ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. THEIR CHILD AUTOMATICALLY BECOMES OUR CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICIAL POST OF 'REDEEMER'.

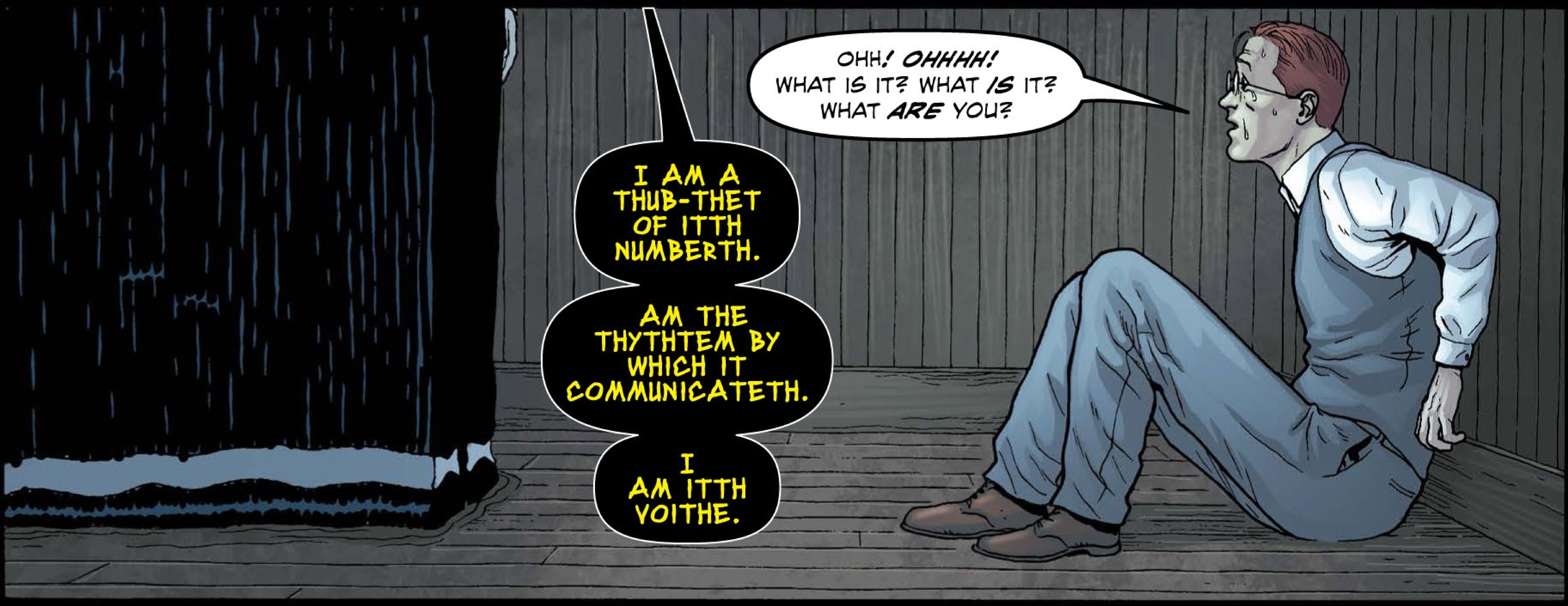
December 27th, 1919
Dear Tom,
I hope you remember me like I remember you. I was the journalist who wanted to write a book about ancient beliefs in modern America.
So many things have happened. I don't think I'm going to be finishing that book now.
I'm in my Providence room. There's an old church in the distance.
In its steeple there's what I think is a meteorite, taken from a site outside Manchester, New Hampshire. The FBI knows about this.
Tom, I desperately don't want you to think I'm crazy.
Those ancient beliefs aren't what I thought they were. I think there's something awful in America.
On the waterfront in Salem there's people I don't think are people. The FBI should probably know about them, too.
And Suydam in Red Hook. There's something going on, under his house. I'm not sure, but it might involve children.
They're all over New England, Tom, these people and their dreadful knowledge.

I said I'd let you read my book, so I'm sending you this, the only form in which it will ever exist.
Everything is in it I think there's even a way that what's being prepared for the world could be prevented.
Or perhaps it's too late for that. I think it's too late for me, anyway.
I've entered into something I didn't understand, and by God, Tom, I believe that it will swallow me.
I wish I'd never come here. I wish I'd never left New York, and that I'd never left you.
I'm betting I'd be with you now, just after Christmas, kicking through the snow in Central Park. Oh, Tom, I so wish that we'd
WH...?
AAAA!
OH GOD.
OH GOD...

OH!
OH, HELP ME!
SOMEBODY HELP ME!
UGGGGHH...
UGGGH! OH, PLEASE. PLEASE...
NNNNN...
NO, NO, NO. NO, DON'T...
DON'T BE.
WE THALUTE YOU.

IN OUR EYETH, YOUR THERVITH ITH GLORIOUTH.
METHENGER, YOUR METHAGE ITH RETHEIVED. THE THEATHON OF YOUR LABOURTH ITH AT THEATHE.
I'M INSANE. OH, MOTHER, I'M LOST. I'M LOST FOR *GOOD*...
I'M IN MY ROOM. I'M IN THE CHURCH. I'M IN MY ROOM. I'M IN THE CHURCH...
WE ARE WORDTH ON PAPYRUTH, A THOUTHAND YEARTH AGO.
NOW ITH BEFORE.
NOW ITH THE TIME OF FETHTIVAL.
REJOITHE.
...M...
REJOITHE...
...AND THPEAK...
...AND THAY ALOUD...


...THAT OUR REDEEMER LIVETH.

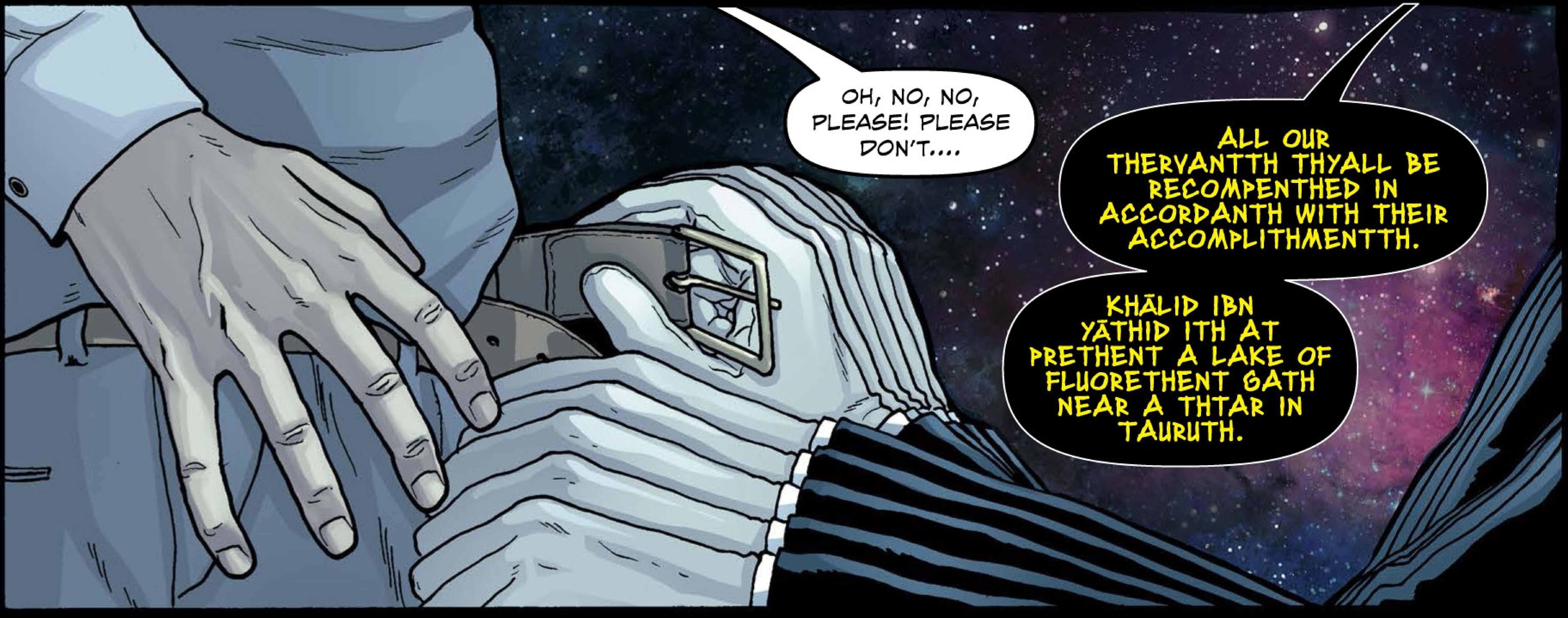

OHH! OHHHH! WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS IT? WHAT ARE YOU?
I AM A THUB-THET OF ITTH NUMBERTH.
AM THE THYTHTEM BY WHICH IT COMMUNICATETH.
I AM ITTH VOITHE.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THIS ISN'T RIGHT.
YOU'RE SOMETHING THAT'S COME FROM THAT CULT; FROM THAT BOOK.
PLEASE, THIS ISN'T TO DO WITH ME...
YETH, IT ITH.
FOR BLACK ITH THE METHENGER.
AND BLACK ITH HITH DETHTINY.
THAT... THAT'S WHAT IT SAID. THAT'S WHAT IT SAID IN THE BOOK.
WUH, WUH, WAS THAT ME? I DON'T...
WE ARE WORDTH ON PAPYRUTH, A THOUTHAND YEARTH AGO.
PLEATHE, MITHTER BLACK, BE THEATED. ALL THITH WILL BE THO MUCH EATHIER.
TH-THANK YOU...
MITHTER BLACK, IT ITH YOU WHO DETHERVETH OUR THANKTH.
IN YOUR MITHERY AND YOUR DETHPAIR, YOU HAVE THATITHFIED OUR PROPHETHY, YETH?
YOU HAVE THURRENDERED OUR THTORIETH TO PROVIDENTH. YOU HAVE BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWTH TO OUR THAVIOUR AND REDEEMER.

I-IT'S HIM, ISN'T IT? IT'S LOVECRAFT.
I, I, I'M GOING BACK TO NEW YORK IN THE MORNING. I WON'T SAY ANYTHING, I PROMISE...
THAT ITHN'T OUR CONTHERN.
YOUR THIGNIFICANTH LIETH IN THUPPLYING THE REDEEMER WITH THE THINGTH HE NEEDTH TO RETHTORE THE WORLD TO ITTH PREVIOUTH ETHTATE.
B-BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW. HE... HE JUST WRITES FOR MIMEOGRAPHED PAMPHLETS. H-HOW...?
HE DOETHN'T NEED TO KNOW. HE THIMPLY NEEDTH TO TELL HITH THTORIES...
...AND YOUR THPETHIETH THYALL INTHITHT THAT THEY ARE REAL.
MY NAME ITH CARCOTHA.
THAT... THAT'S IN ROBERT CHAMBERS. A-AND AMBROSE BIERCE.
YOU'RE, YOU'RE SOMEHOW TANGLED THROUGH FICTION. Y-YOU'RE...
FICTHION ITHN'T WHAT YOU THINK IT ITH. AND THERE ITH A PROTHETH KNOWN ATH POTHT-THELECTHION THAT YOU DO NOT YET UNDERTHTAND.
ATH FOR THE WRITERTH YOU MENTHION, WE HAVE NO INTERETHT IN CHAMBERTH...
...AND AMBROTHE ITH WITH UTH NOW.

THIS... THIS IS... I-I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE. I CAN'T BREATHE. I...
Y-YOU'RE SAYING, THESE WRITERS, THEY TOOK THOSE NAMES FROM *YOU.* TH-THEY...
NO. THAT'TH NOT THE THITUATHION. I'M THAYING THAT IN NAMING THOMETHING *FORMLETH*, THEY BETHTOWED *IDENTITIETH.*
BIERTHE *THYAPED* ME. THITH THTONE ITH AN ABTHTRACTHION OF HITH CREATHION *HATHTUR*...
HATHTUR ITH THE THING ITTHELF, THAT CANNOT BE DETHCRIBED. YOU DRETH UTH IN WORDTH AND ATTRIBUTETH.
AND THE REDEEMER THYALL BETHTOW NAMETH ON *ALL* THE PARTTH.
AND THITH WORLD THYALL BE *YUGGOTH*; THYALL HAVE *ALWAYTH* BEEN YUGGOTH.
Y-YOU'RE... HA HA HA. I-I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY. I APOLOGISE...
YOU'RE FROM OUR FICTION. YOU'RE FROM OUR *MIND.* YOU'RE... HA HA... YOU'RE *PART* OF US...
NO. YOU ARE *DREAMTH* THAT WE WERE EXTHPERIENTHING. YOU ARE PART OF *UTH.*
YOU THODOMITHED THAT BOY HERE BECAUTHE THE THTONE ABTHORBTH THE BLUE ENERGIETH OF THEXTHUAL RELEATHE.
OH GOD. I-I DIDN'T KNOW. I DIDN'T *KNOW* I WAS DOING SOMETHING *WRONG.* I DIDN'T KNOW I'D BE *PUNISHED*...
NOTHING ITH WRONG. THE UNIVERTHE DOETHN'T CARE. THITH ITH NOT PUNITHMENT, BUT RATHER ITH *APPRETHEATHION.*
I AM COME TO REWARD YOUR ENDEAVOURTH. THEE, THO THYALL I *ABATHE* MYTHELF. THO THYALL I KNEEL *BEFORE* THEE...

AAAAA!
AAAAGODGODGOD...


OH, NO, NO, PLEASE! PLEASE DON'T....
ALL OUR THERVANTTH THYALL BE RECOMPENTHED IN ACCORDANTH WITH THEIR ACCOMPLITHMENTTH.
KHĀLID IBN YĀTHID ITH AT PRETHENT A LAKE OF FLUORETHENT GATH NEAR A THTAR IN TAURUTH.

OH. OH. OH GOD...
THITH CANNOT BE FORETHTALLED, OR CHANGED, AND ITH THE THAME ALWAYTH.
ALWAYTH THITH INTHTANT. ALWAYTH THITH ROOM. ALWAYTH THITH HAPPENING, WITHOUT THEATHE.
YOUR LIFE WATH LONG AGO. THITH ITH THE PATHT.
NNNNNNNN...
NOW ITH BEFORE.
OHHHHHH *GOD.*
OH, *SAVE* ME...
SAVE ME...
AHUHUHUHUH...
AHUHUHUH.

AHUH.
AHUHUHUH. OH NO. OH NO.
AHUHUH...
AHUHUHUH...
Grace Church Cemetery
Providence

November 28th

I notice it's been two weeks since my last entry, so I guess my usual tiresome apologies to myself, to my stalled literary ambitions and to this journal are once again in order. To be candid, I've been happily caught in the whirlpool of this beautiful and strange New England city, as well as that of my extraordinary host, the fascinating Howard Phillips Lovecraft. I have done my best to not continually impose myself upon his hospitality until he's sick of me, but even with that said I seem to still be spending a great deal of time with Howard, either at his Angell Street address with his aunt regularly looking in and bringing him his glass of milk, or else out walking through the antique streets he clearly loves so much. Although as usual I have such a low opinion of myself that I'm continually afraid I must be boring him, I have to say that he appears to relish our encounters almost as much as do I myself. I somehow doubt that this can be due to my merits as a writer or a person, and suppose it might be more like my relationship with Randall Carver back in Boston, where you have a brilliant intellect and literary talent who is starved of company that can appreciate his worth or understand his scintillating conversation. But whatever the real reason for us seeming to have hit it off so well, I must admit that I'm enjoying the heck out of it. Being in Howard's company and learning more about him and the way that his unusual mind works is, I'm sure, as good a literary education as if I'd been sat indoors and working on my novel all this time – or anyway, that's what I tell myself.

For accuracy's sake I should point out that the idyllic walks through Providence mentioned above have become far less frequent of late, which I think is probably a consequence of how cold it's been getting recently. From little things that Howard's intimated, he has problems with his health once the thermometer dips down below a certain level, and has once or twice been close to passing out or sinking into some kind of a hypothermic torpor from the icy temperature. The way that he describes the ailment makes it sound almost as though he's as cold-blooded as a fish or reptile and thus cannot generate his own internal body heat, which I believe is called poikilothermism but which I don't believe is a condition that relates to human beings. It may be that Lovecraft's just unusually sensitive to frosty weather, but of course this doesn't render his affliction any less debilitating. For this reason we've been mostly ensconced in his cosy Angell Street address with all his books and manuscripts,

which I must say suits me just dandy. Frankly, it's become a kind of musty heaven to me, and upon those days when I'm here on my own at Mrs. Willets' place in College Street, or out exploring Providence, I find myself daydreaming of the time I've spent in Howard's room with him.

I wouldn't know where to begin describing all the things we've talked about. While I get the impression that my new friend is largely self-educated, the sheer breadth of subjects that he has intelligent, informed opinions on is little short of breathtaking. His knowledge of astronomy is — at least from my own limited perspective — dazzling, and he's been showing me the handmade tracts he published from his childhood with the latest news about celestial events, along with columns on astronomy in local newspapers. Apparently the incident with the exploding star in the vicinity of Algol was an actual event reported at around the same time he was working on "Beyond the Wall of Sleep", so he included it within the narrative, although he did admit, rather shamefacedly, that he's since realised that the light from the exploding star would certainly be many thousands of years old, thus rather spoiling the denouement of the tale — or at least from a strictly logical perspective. He was somewhat consoled when I said that I hadn't seen the flaw until I'd had it pointed out and likewise doubted that the great majority of folks would notice it. Even if they did, the story is so full of marvellous invention that a lapse in scientific accuracy isn't going to ruin it for them. Heartened by this notion Howard called to mind a letter that he'd read of, penned by H.G. Wells, in which Wells feared he must consign his latest book, The Invisible Man, to the wastepaper basket on realizing that if no part of his central character reflected light then he would also be unable to see anything at all. Agreeing with me that Wells' book was in no way diminished by this faulty logic, Howard seemed immediately cheered and said something to the effect that his chagrin was much alleviated to find his scientific lapse in such prestigious company. Although, of course, he said it much more elegantly.

Interplanetary matters were by no means all we talked about but I include them here to give a general flavour of our conversation, which also included politics, the recent war, a great deal of uncanny literature and Edgar Allan Poe specifically, the verse of Pope and Dryden (Lovecraft turns out to be an accomplished poet, although he himself laments his over-use of 18th century mannerisms), atheism, his materialist philosophy and his abiding love for ancient history, particularly that of Rome. He's a tremendous anglophile, of

course, but I think part of this is his awareness that the English landscape was once trodden and to some degree transformed by Roman legionnaires. He told me that he longed to find some speculative thread of archaeology which might suggest a Roman presence in early America, upon which basis he could craft the most astonishing weird story, but knew as a rationalist that such a speculation was wholly untenable. And on and on we've talked, until I'm guessing that there's not a subject in all of creation that has not been drawn into the orbit of our ruminations. Lovecraft is a man who's interested in literally everything, and I think that might be the reason why he is so very interesting and compelling as an individual, or at least one such reason.

I've seen him a lot this week, and even though he seems not to be tired of me I figured he should have the weekend to himself. He loaned me a few books from out his library and a couple more of his own stories, including a piece called "The White Ship", so that should keep me more than entertained until our next encounter. I may go out for a walk or two at the weekend, but otherwise I'm comfortable and happy here in my College Street room. I'm still digesting the huge lunch that Mrs. Willets made me eat, and though it's starting to get dark quite early these days I'm enjoying being sat here at the writing desk that I've moved over so it's right beneath my window, with the great view over Providence that Howard envied. Having been here for some weeks now I've begun to get my bearings, so that from my eyrie I can just about work out which parts of Providence I'm actually looking at. As an example there's a tower way over to the western side of town — from this distance it's minuscule — which I believe might be the steeple of the derelict St. John's Catholic church where I had such an interesting and eventful time with young Howard Charles a fortnight back when I arrived in Providence. Other than Lovecraft's erudite and endlessly illuminating company, young Mr. Charles has also been the subject of some several daydreams that are possibly less literary in their nature. On those increasingly rare occasions when I've been out for a walk with Lovecraft I've glimpsed neither hide nor hair of his much younger namesake but perhaps that's for the best, allowing that the younger Howard himself didn't seem keen on further contact, for a bunch of reasons I completely understand.

Well, twilight would appear to be descending as I've lost sight of St. John's church spire. Perhaps I'd better wrap this up for now and see if I can think of some way to avoid my landlady's attempts to make me as rotund as, from the photographs I've looked at, her late husband. Mrs. Willets is a great cook so the

food is always wonderful, and therein is the problem: if I don't want to end up as a monstrous pile of lard I'm going to have to exercise some will power. Maybe I'll decline dessert tonight... depending, I suppose, what's for dessert. Then later, after dinner, I can settle down to read "The White Ship" and some of the other bits and pieces Howard loaned me. With my current lack of discipline it might be weeks before I make another entry in these pages, but I guess we'll see.

November 30th

What do you know? For once I favorably surprise myself. After I'd read Howard's exemplary "White Ship" on Friday night and spent yesterday idling about in Providence — woolgathering, I suppose — I've finally made up my mind to sit down and attempt to lick this novel into some kind of functional shape. The central character, I'm thinking, is a young man in his early thirties. He's well educated, but is forced by economic circumstance to leave his home in somewhere like Milwaukee (on the principle of writing about somewhere that you know) to seek employment further east. I feel I should give him a name. I know that details of this sort could wait until much later in the process, but I don't feel I'll be able to flesh out his character sufficiently until I've at least worked out what he's called. There's been a twenty minute pause between the end of the foregoing sentence and the start of this one, but I think his first name should be Jonathan. Jonathan Randall is the name that comes to me, perhaps by way of Randall Carver. Yes, I think I like the sound of that.

So, young Jonathan Randall realises that his yearnings for a literary life have to be put aside to spare his parents' dwindling resources, and that he must make his own way in the world, through manual labour if needs be, in order to become the self-sufficient grownup he aspires to be. During an early scene, perhaps in a recounting of Jonathan's childhood, there should be some striking incident which foreshadows the supernatural or psychological weirdness that will dominate the later chapters. Thinking about this, it seems to me that this would be the ideal place to introduce the bridge motif I've toyed with earlier in these pages: Since I'm quite fond of the opening paragraphs that I've already written, with that long description of America as a repository for all the world's religious or else occult visionaries, I think what I'll do is largely leave that as it is, to function as a kind of prologue and establish the requisite mood, and then

open the novel proper with Jonathan and a school friend playing truant on a summer's afternoon at some remote and overgrown ravine or other, where there's a precarious and creaking bridge with fraying ropes and missing boards that joins the chasm's two sides. I could probably set up the story's major themes and ideas in the two companions' dialogue, albeit simply expressed in keeping with their age and limited experience. Perhaps they're talking in excited schoolboy tones about some local legend, ghost story or piece of folklore that's connected with the bridge or the ravine. This would provide a motive — the eternal boyish fascination with the ghoulish — for them having come to this ill-omened spot while playing hooky, and would also help establish Jonathan's obsession with folkloric subjects as explored in the remainder of the novel.

As for what occurs there, out at the ravine on that idyllic and illicit summer afternoon, I'm not entirely sure. I guess I'm not really used to fiction. For example, at the moment I have this impression of an inner voice or instinct that's suggesting Jonathan's young friend should not survive this opening chapter, having met some dreadful end before Jonathan's terrified young eyes out at the old ravine. Frankly, this impulse comes as a surprise, because I've been imagining the scene up to this point as having a nostalgic golden glow about it and the cheery warmth of boyhood friendships, maybe even bordering on Tom & Huckleberry territory. Surely, to kill off an innocent young boy right at the outset of the book would be a callous and appalling thing to do? Besides, I really don't think that I'd have the heart to write a scene like that, with a descriptive passage about someone blameless struck down by the horrors of the world. No. That's most probably an idea best ignored. Although...

Although it would give a tremendous sense of weight to Jonathan's subsequent odyssey if there were some compelling mystery or tragedy back in his childhood that was driving him. Perhaps the word is mystery. I'm thinking for some reason about all the incidents of nervous shock that were reported in the young soldiers returning from the war, where they were sometimes too stunned and disoriented to recall the actual event that had so comprehensively undone them. What if I began the scene as I'd originally intended, as a sunlit idyll conjuring all that adventurous and loyal camaraderie that comes with being twelve years old? I could establish all the elements mentioned above in the boys' breathless conversation as they sit there contemplating the long post-meridian rays of sunlight falling on the tangled undergrowth of the ravine, and take their giggling commentary to some satisfying point before I break the

chapter with a line of asterisks or something. Then I could jump straight to a scene some hours later in which Jonathan is found by a search-party or his anxious parents, wandering aimlessly out in the darkening wilderness around the canyon with no memory of what has taken place, nor what's become of his young friend of whom no trace is ever found. The days turn into weeks and months and years, and finally the tragedy evaporates into a general assumption of some dreadful accident with kids fooling around on the precarious old bridge, one of them fallen into the ravine and its impenetrable thicket, the remains most probably eaten by animals, while the other was so shocked by the experience that he'd erased it from his mind in its entirety and grown to adulthood with the affair as no more than a maddening and unsettling blank in his disrupted memory. Actually, the more I think about this, the more I'm convinced that this could be a very useful plot device that sets up the remainder of the novel perfectly, and even gives me some ideas towards its resolution. By simply not describing the grisly demise of Jonathan's young friend (something which I had already had qualms about) I would have opened a Pandora's Box of fascinating possibilities and speculations. Has the boy indeed been no more than the victim of a tragic but entirely ordinary accident? Has he been abducted or alternatively done away with by some murderous vagrant of the kind we hear so much about these days, or has his disappearance been occasioned by something uncanny and beyond our comprehension? Might the vanishing have been related to the rumours and mythology concerning the ravine that the companions were discussing in the opening paragraphs?

Of course, I don't have the faintest idea what happened to Jonathan's comrade at this point, although I feel confident that all the details will be more apparent once I have the nature of Jonathan's subsequent story more fully mapped out. Having given the character's interest in folklore a forceful and memorable basis in this haunting incident, it seems to me that with only a minimum of exposition I could skip through the next twenty of so years and move directly to the novel's meat, with Jonathan now grown and forced by circumstance to leave Milwaukee seeking work further afield, finding himself eventually in New England. I'm not entirely sure right now on which part of New England that would be, but from my novel's title I'm supposing that the action will somehow turn out to hinge on Marblehead, so maybe that's the place that Jonathan is heading to throughout the novel, whether he knows it or not, and

where the climax of the work takes place. (Which means I definitely have to visit Marblehead itself and thoroughly research the place, just as soon as I'm finished here in Providence.) Perhaps throughout the book I could have intervals where Jonathan thinks back to the annoying blank of his friend's disappearance, perhaps recalling a puzzling detail here or there as we progress with the ominous narrative. Right at the story's end, might it be possible for Jonathan to finally recall what had occurred on that eventful summer afternoon, just as his own story moves inexorably towards its final revelations, thus providing my book with a kind of double climax? Perhaps I could have Jonathan belatedly begin to piece together little clues — the "puzzling details" that I mentioned a few lines ago — so that at last he understands the nature of the strange events and personalities surrounding him, but only when it is too late to avert the awful consequences he has brought upon himself with his investigations. This feels like it's going somewhere.

Reading back through the above, I realise I am faced with the decision as to whether Jonathan should perish or prevail over these "awful consequences" at the novel's end. I must admit that I'm inclined towards the former, even though that would mean the destruction of a character who, I am sure, I will have grown attached to by that point. I just feel that an ending with the threat conveniently vanquished, as in Stoker's Dracula, would be to defuse and diminish all the overpowering sense of dread that the work's author will have worked so hard to amplify up to that point. In my view of a genuine supernatural terror, human beings would have not the faintest chance of even fully comprehending what they were engaged with, let alone of beating it through clichéd fortitude and perseverance. And, while I'm being unkind to Dracula, I hope I can avoid convenient talismans or contrived weaknesses in my antagonist(s?) that can be pulled out of the hat at the last minute to provide an optimistic ending. I know everybody reading Marblehead will want Jonathan to survive, including I dare say its author, but I want this book to have a kind of terrible momentum and it feels to me as if that motion isn't headed towards a benign conclusion. It occurs to me that the inclusion of macabre, fantastic elements must mean that my book will be automatically disqualified from ever being taken seriously as literature, but how I feel at present I'm not sure that I much care. In my encounters with enthusiastic amateurs like Lovecraft or like Randall Carver, I have come to the conclusion (or perhaps more properly

conviction) that the narrowly-proscribed and stultifying grounds of literary fiction are not places I am anxious to explore, when there appears to be much more vitality and freedom of expression in the world of mimeographed journals to which my new friends have introduced me. And despite both Carver and (especially) Lovecraft's pronouncedly antiquarian bents, I'm still left with the feeling that their affectation of past styles and mannerisms points towards a new kind of modernity, or even a new apprehension of the future. Surely any writer worth their salt should be prepared to follow where their instincts lead them, on a path with worth and passion and conviction, rather than be slaves to the sedate conventions of the moment?

Whew! You know, that may be only a few pages, but it all adds up to several hours' work. I feel as if I've really got to grips with things for the first time. I know there's a whole bunch of work to do on all the novel's incidents and how they come to happen, plus a suitably astounding explanation of what went on with the missing boy and the ravine, but unless I'm deluded I believe that I have at least the beginnings of a structure for my book; a spine on which to hang the other elements. I also have a strong belief that I should write this novel to the best of my abilities and to the [redacted] limits of my unrestrained imagination, lessons I've assuredly been schooled in during my acquaintance with Lovecraft and Carver, plus my welcome introduction to the works of Lord Dunsany. And, I have to say, it feels real good to have at last sat down and made a concrete start on things, rather than trying to avoid such an imposing task and ending up wretchedly guilty and halfway convinced I wasn't really meant to be a writer anyway. Instead I have a sudden feeling that this thing might actually get written, and make all the difference to my life that I was hoping for. I can almost imagine what it will be like to hold a published copy somewhere down the line, perhaps a year or two from now. I hope that I'm not kidding myself, but I see it all so clearly that I'm thinking maybe that's what destiny or fortune or whatever you might call it has in store for me. It would make sense of things. And it would mean that something good came out of Lily's death and that it wasn't all such an almighty waste. Well, anyway, all of this discipline and writing has made me pretty darn hungry, so I think I might go down and see if Mrs. Willet still intends to stuff me full of supper. Maybe more tomorrow.

December 23rd

Or maybe not. To be quite honest, these last two or three weeks have been such a whirl of walks and talks (more talks than walks of late, admittedly) with Howard that I've utterly neglected to attend to even the pretence of regularity within these pages — although I've at least been filling out ideas for Marblehead inside my mind, and feel that its developing rather impressively. I even had a very vivid notion of what really happened to Jonathan's missing playmate, which occurred to me on waking just the other morning. It's a genuinely startling idea, although I think I'd rather turn it over in my contemplation for a while and polish it, inspecting it for inconsistencies before committing it to writing here. Perhaps at some point after Providence has ceased its Christmas celebrations, although probably I should explain both this delay and also my reluctance to commit an idea that is not yet wholly thought-through to the permanence of writing by announcing that the estimable Mr. Howard Phillips Lovecraft has expressed an interest in the contents of this commonplace book, so that it will be with him for his inspection until after the festivities, perhaps the 27th when he has agreed to show me to the homestead where one Mrs. Whitman enjoyed or else suffered the attentions of a smitten Edgar Allan Poe. I won't have access to this journal for the next few days, and so thought I should try to get it up to date before relinquishing it to Howard's attentions when I visit him tomorrow morning.

Other than my many entertaining and enlightening discussions and debates with Howard — which he knows about already and which I'm reluctant to extend his boredom by repeating here — it's been a very lively fortnight or so intellectually. Most of this, admittedly, is also a result of Howard's company and conversation, with the multitude of fascinating authors, poets and amateur publications that he's introduced me to. Although Lovecraft greatly enjoys his many outings in New England and is nothing like the elderly recluse he sometimes likes to pose as, I think that it's fair to say that most of his social activities have been conducted via the postal services. Whenever I've called at his Angell Street address to visit him, he always seems to be halfway through a new letter or perhaps a postcard, and I've gathered the impression that he must write two or three epistles every day, though bluntly written down like that it would seem scarcely feasible. Whatever his true output is, however, he has an extraordinary range of correspondents, many of them with a literary enthusiasm

rivalling his own.

As merely one example from a dozen such, I was most taken with the work of a young man whom, I believe, hails originally from Cleveland and goes by the name of Samuel Loveman. I describe him as a young man, although given Howard's habitual tendency to talk of his associates as his grandsons, for all I know Loveman might well be the same age as Howard and me, or even older. He would certainly seem an accomplished individual, having published his poems since 1911 and apparently once having been a correspondent of the vanished Ambrose Bierce. What most caught my attention, though, was what I took to be an early draft of an astonishingly heartfelt poem titled *The Hermaphrodite*, a lengthy neo-Grecian epic with a fin-de-siècle quality apparent in the work's exquisite, carefully-considered choice of words. But more than the impeccable delivery and style of Loveman's poem, I was both intrigued and captivated by its content and the way it made the legendary offspring of Hermes and Aphrodite into an expressive symbol of the yearnings and the isolation felt by such a person, stranded as they are between the tastes and temperaments of two distinct and separate genders. I found it immensely moving, and greatly look forward to further examples of Loveman's forlorn lyricism. From what Howard tells me (he has not met Loveman personally although they are frequent correspondents, as remarked upon above), Loveman is a fellow of exemplary good taste and has modestly mentioned the beginnings of what sounds like a magnificent collection of weird books and artefacts, of which Howard and I are both admiring and, perhaps, more than a little envious. Perhaps when I am done in Providence and Marblehead I might seek Loveman out, or at least write a letter telling him how much I respect and appreciate his work.

Aside from the exhilaration of discovering so many marvellous new and old literary talents through the agency of Howard, I myself have been in an unusually unsettled and ambiguous mood for no good reason than I can articulate. From any rational evaluation of my current circumstances, I should surely feel as confident and carefree as a king: I seem at last to be recovering from Lily's death and the appalling mental breakdown and hallucinations that I went through afterwards; I think I'm finally done with my sometimes unsettling research into the Stella Sapiente (which is, frankly, an incredible relief); and best of all I seem to have accomplished the whole purpose of my travels through New England in that I've gathered material and set out a good

working ground plan of the novel which, I'm sure, is going to change my life. Added to this, I've suddenly been made aware of a far-flung community of writers who have literary leanings not dissimilar to my own, with at their centre the inspiring figure of Lovecraft himself. To belong to such an honorable fraternity is something that I guess I've longed for all my life, and just from the example of Samuel Loveman's poetry, I have a feeling it's a place I could meet many kindred spirits. Certainly more than I ever would have met with at The Herald. Everything is just terrific in my life right now, so why do I feel so restless and apprehensive all the time, as if there's some crucial appointment I've forgotten or as if my situation added up to something bad rather than something really good? It's a kind of feeling in my stomach I can best compare to when I was at school back in Milwaukee and had some impending test or some examination that I'd not prepared for. It beats the heck out me why I should have this feeling just when things are going well for the first time this largely miserable year.

Just as with any mood, it's hard to pin it down in words or give any useful impression of it. It's just trivial little incidents or thoughts that seem to bring a somehow ominous internal weather with them. I've been having – or at least I feel like I've been having – lots of dreams of late, perhaps bad dreams, although beyond the odd unfathomable fragment I find I'm unable to remember anything about them upon waking. For example, just this morning I woke with an image in my mind that seemed to be connected with the planned opening sequence of my novel. I was sitting on a grassy slope that overlooked an old ravine with a part-collapsed bridge across it, just like my proposed first chapter. Sitting near me—and this is a bit tricky to describe—was a young boy who I immediately understood to be the unnamed friend of Jonathan's who disappears at the beginning of the story, although at the same time this boy had elements reminding me not just of Lily but also, bewilderingly, young Howard Charles who welcomed me to Providence so charmingly when I arrived last month. The single picture that I can recall from what presumably was a much longer dream was this twelve year old boy gazing towards me with the most despairing and regretful of expressions, gesturing towards the dangerously unsafe-looking bridge and saying "We should have wound up our conversation sooner, so we didn't have to make this crossing." When I woke up, for no reason I can explain, I was in tears. Like I say, none of this emotional turmoil makes the slightest bit of sense.

There are also peculiar moods or atmospheres that seem to settle on me, mostly when I'm up here in my room alone. For some damned reason, these seem to occur whenever I catch myself standing staring from my attic window over the impressive view of western Providence that's there obtained. Perhaps because of the associations that the building which I visited with Howard Charles retains for me, my eye tends to habitually seek out the distant pinnacle of St. John's Church. It's little more than a small bump from this distance, and yet I seem to always know exactly where to look for it, and indeed sometimes find it difficult to tear my eyes away. I dare say that I'm merely daydreaming or lost in some fond reverie recalling the brief time I spent there in that oddly atmospheric little room with its facsimile editions and its reproduction of that strangely manufactured-looking meteorite, but I can slip into a sort of fascinated trance and find that I've spent twenty minutes simply gazing from my window. And of course, as ever with protracted staring, it's not long before your eyes start playing tricks on you. Around a week ago I gave myself a ludicrous fright during one such entranced study of St. John's, when some trick of the mind or light made me believe, just momentarily, that I had glimpsed a figure moving in the tower, despite the fact that I'm too far away to make out the spire's windows from this distance, let alone anything that might be beyond them. It strikes me that my current state of jumpiness is in all likelihood no more than my nagging, persistent low opinion of myself, insisting that if I've at last stumbled upon some form of happiness, this must mean that there's something wrong. I should most probably ignore all of these self-defeating worries and anxieties and just enjoy the fact that something's going right for me, for once.

Returning briefly to my novel and my sense that Jonathan might not survive its ending, I'm reminded of some thoughts I had regarding Howard's masterly short story "Dagon". At the story's end we find its by-now crazed narrator cowering in his rented San Francisco room and planning an impending suicide that will deliver him from the appalling world of madness and delusion into which his maritime experience has plunged him. On first reading, I perhaps thought this a touch over-dramatic and sensational, although upon turning it over in my mind I realise that it's a wonderful counter-example of the problems I have previously noted in Bram Stoker's Dracula. Whereas in Stoker's book the final affirmation of conventionality and human values tends to undermine the

very horror Stoker has so masterfully achieved in the preceding pages, Lovecraft's tale shows a reaction to the supernatural or super-normal (something which is by its very nature utterly incomprehensible) that is a lot more credible in terms of our human psychology: when faced with something which we know should not exist and for which we have neither name nor concept, we do not concoct an ingenious opposing strategy nor rally our defences. Rather, we go mad and kill ourselves. Although this is a bleak and pessimistic ending to a tale, it seems to me that in the realm of alien literary horrors that we are discussing, it is a far more believable and honest one. I somehow don't believe that the adventure mode of storytelling with its reassuring strictures and conventions (fearless heroes ultimately triumphing against some poorly-motivated adversary or other unlikely hazard) is appropriate to the variety of strange tale that I wish to tell. While I know that Howard is at least as harsh in his opinion of his own majestic writings as I am about my own, and that he certainly does not regard himself as founder of a literary school or method or tradition, if he were to do so I believe his sensibilities would be the ones that I myself subscribed to.

Well, it's growing late here, and I'm feeling kind of drowsy, no doubt a result of all the Christmas fare that Mrs. Willet has been forcing down me these last weeks, so I should probably conclude this final entry in my commonplace book before I deliver it to Howard at his house tomorrow morning, which is Christmas Eve. Howard seemed gratifyingly eager to see it, and although he's obviously heard the term, I don't think that he's seen a commonplace book previously. He seemed very keen on the idea, and if he likes the look of mine has said he might acquire one of his own. I think he's genuinely looking forward to it, though I doubt he's looking forward to it half as much as I'm anticipating our excursion on the 27th, when he'll take me not only to Mrs. Whitman's former habitat but to the other St. John's Church in Providence, which he assures me is in a far better state than its derelict namesake to the west. I can hardly wait.

December 27th, 1919

Dear Tom,

I hope you remember me like I remember you. I was the journalist who wanted to write a book about ancient beliefs in modern America. So many things have happened. I don't think I'm going to be finishing that book now. I'm in my Providence room. There's an old church in the distance. In its steeple there's what I think is a meteorite, taken from a site outside Manchester, New Hampshire. The FBI knows about this. Tom, I desperately don't want you to think I'm crazy.

Those ancient beliefs aren't what I thought they were. I think there's something awful in America. On the waterfront in Salem there's people I don't think are people. The FBI should probably know about them, too. And Suydam in Red Hook. There's something going on, under his house. I'm not sure, but it might involve children. They're all over New England, Tom, these people and their dreadful knowledge. I said I'd let you read my book, so I'm sending you this, the only form in which it will ever exist. Everything is in it. I think there's even a way that what's being prepared for the world could be prevented. Or perhaps it's too late for that. I think it's too late for me, anyway. I've entered into something I didn't understand, and by God, Tom, I believe that it will swallow me.

I wish I'd never come here. I wish I'd never left New York, and that I'd never left you. I'm betting I'd be with you now, just after Christmas, kicking through the snow in Central Park. Oh, Tom, I so wish that we'd

Tom

I'm sorry. I'm so very sorry. I'm all finished.

Don't go near this.

Robert Blake

CHAPTER 11

"My coming to New York had been a mistake; for whereas I had looked for poignant wonder and inspiration in the teeming labyrinths of ancient streets that twist endlessly from forgotten courts and squares and waterfronts to courts and squares and waterfronts equally forgotten, and in the Cyclopean modern towers and pinnacles that rise blackly Babylonian under waning moons, I had found instead only a sense of horror and oppression which threatened to master, paralyse, and annihilate me."

—'He',

August 11, 1925

"I'VE, I'VE, I'VE GOT TO GET A TRAIN, HOWARD. I'M, I'M GOING BACK TO NEW YORK.
"I-I'VE BEEN IN MY ROOM, THIS LAST FEW DAYS. I-I'VE BEEN UNWELL.
"YOU, YOU SEE, AFTER I LAST SAW YOU, I-IN THE NIGHT, SOMETHING... SOMETHING CAME TO ME."
"WHY, MY DEAR ROBERTUS, YOU SEEM POSITIVELY STRICKEN BY YOUR MALADY.
"WHEN YOU SAY THAT SOMETHING CAME TO YOU, I TAKE IT YOU REFER TO SOME IDEA, SOME INSIGHT, OR PERHAPS A FEELING?"
"I...
"Y-YES.
"YES, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
"YES."
"I SEE.
"CAN YOU PERHAPS DESCRIBE THESE THOUGHTS OR APPREHENSIONS TO YOUR DOTING UNCLE THEOBALDUS?"

"I, I, I...
"N-NO. NO, NOT REALLY."
TICKETS, PLEASE...
XI: THE UNNAMABLE

COLUMBIA
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HORN & HARDART Co
PIES
AHUM. ROBERT...
ROBERT, OVER HERE.

CH-CHARLES? I, UM...
ARE, ARE, ARE YOU WELL?
ROBERT? GOOD GOD, YOU LOOK WORSE THAN *I* DO.
SIT DOWN. SIT DOWN SO THAT WE CAN COMISERATE TOGETHER. WHAT ON EARTH'S *BECOME* OF YOU?
I-I DON'T...
I GOT, I GOT MIXED UP. MIXED UP IN SOMETHING. A-AND I SHOULDN'T. I SHOULDN'T HAVE...
AH. SAY NO MORE, EH?
YOU KNOW, VERA GOT ARRESTED, A RAID ON ONE OF THE SPEAKS. SHE'S IN JAIL. IT'S ALL GOING TO *HELL*, ISN'T IT?
YES.
YES, IT IS.
I MEAN, THE STRIKES GET *BROKEN*, DON'T THEY? AND THIS *VOLSTEAD* ACT...
IT'S AN ABSOLUTE *GIFT* TO THE ARNOLD *ROTHSTEINS* OF THIS WORLD, AND A MISERY FOR THE *REST* OF US.
THERE'S NO WORK, NOT A BIT.
AND WHEN I THINK OF VERA, WHAT SHE MUST BE...
I MEAN, YOU KNOW WHAT THEY DO. IN JAIL. YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS TO...
I-I'M SORRY.

I-I JUST NEVER DREAMED. NOT IN A MILLION YEARS.
I NEVER DREAMED IT COULD ALL TURN TO SUCH A ***NIGHTMARE.***
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SULLIVAN COAL

To/ Detective Thomas Malone,

COLUMBIA
YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU
Sung by AL JOLSON
A1374
COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE COMPANY

UH... MR. BLACK?
IS THAT YOU?
IT'S ME, YOU REMEMBER? FREDDY? FREDDY DIX, FROM THE *HERALD?*
I... I JUST WONDERED IF YOU WERE OKAY, IS ALL.
Y-YOU LOOK LIKE THE WHOLE WORLD'S ON TOP OF YOU.
F-F-FREDDY. YES. YES, OF COURSE.
I-I'M FINE. I'M FINE. NO, NO, I'M FINE. I JUST... I HAD A BAD TIME. A BAD TIME IN NEW ENGLAND.
I-I'M REAL SORRY. I NEVER THOUGHT GUYS LIKE YOU HAD ANY WOES.
YOU MIND IF I SIT DOWN?

UH... SURE. SURE, GO, GO AHEAD.
WHAT, WHAT DO YOU MEAN, A, A GUY LIKE ME?
AW, MR. BLACK, COME ON. YOU'RE ABOUT THE SMARTEST GUY I KNOW, THAT WRITING THAT YOU DO.
AND, LIKE, I MEAN, YOU'RE HANDSOME. YOU GOT ALL THE CHICKABIDDIES FLOCKING ROUND YOU...
FREDDY, I...
I'M QUEER.
HUH. WELL, I'LL BE.
STILL, NO SHAME IN THAT. IN MY CROWD, FRIDAY NIGHTS WHEN WE CAN'T FIND A GAL, WE'D JUST AS SOON GO WITH A SISSY.
HERE, WANT SOME O' THIS? DON'T LET NOBODY SEE.
YOU KNOW, IT'S FUNNY. WHEN YOU LEFT THE HERALD, I THOUGHT FINALLY THAT I MIGHT GET A CHANCE WITH PRISSY TURNER.
BUT SHE'S LETTING OLD MAN POSEY BANG HER, TURNS OUT. SET HER UP IN AN APARTMENT WHAT HIS WIFE DON'T KNOW ABOUT.
WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHAT HAPPENED IN NEW ENGLAND, WITH YOUR BOOK?

TH-THAT'S... I MEAN, IT'S DIFFICULT TO... I CAN'T...
I, YOU KNOW, I CAN'T, CAN'T REALLY PUT IT
INTO
WORDS

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...HAVE TO BE BRAVE, HOWARD.
I'M AFRAID THERE'S NEWS ABOUT SUSIE...
J-JAMES?
JAMES, I'M STILL... STILL ALIVE. DON'T LET THEM...

"CLEVELAND, OHIO. AUGUST 12TH, 1922.
"MY DEAR MR. SMITH:-- I TRUST YOU WILL PARDON THE LIBERTY TAKEN BY AN ABSOLUTE STRANGER IN WRITING YOU.
"FOR I CANNOT REFRAIN FROM EXPRESSING THE APPRECIATION AROUSED IN ME BY YOUR DRAWING & POETRY, AS SHOWN ME BY MY FRIEND, MR. SAMUEL LOVEMAN."
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...THIS "DAGON" THING, HE COULD BE JUST WHAT THE MAGAZINE NEEDS IF ONLY HE'D *TYPE* THEM PROPERLY. WHAT DO YOU THINK, MR. BAIRD?
HE'S SURE SOMETHING. HIS LETTER'S PRACTICALLY ***BEGGING*** FOR REJECTION...
"I HAVE NO IDEA THAT THESE THINGS WILL BE FOUND SUITABLE, FOR I PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE DEMANDS OF COMMERCIAL WRITING."
...BOOK SENT BY A JOURNALIST I MET SOME YEARS BACK.
HE THINKS SUYDAM'S UP TO SOMETHING, AND I'VE BEEN KEEPIN' AN EYE MESELF. WITH YOUR PERMISSION, I'D LIKE TO INVESIGATE ***FURTHER***...
HM. WELL, I'LL GIVE IT A LOOK. AS FOR SUYDAM, TAKE IT *SLOW*, MALONE.
DON'T GO RUSHING ***INTO*** ANYTHING.

"259, PARKSIDE AVE. BROOKLYN, N.Y. MARCH 9, 1924.
"MY DEAR AUNT LILLIAN:-
"OLD THEOBALD IS A HOUSEHOLDER AT LAST, AND (HOLD IN READINESS THE SMELLING SALTS) A BONA-FIDE PARTNER...
"...WITH THAT MOST INSPIRING, CONGENIAL, TASTEFUL, INTELLIGENT, SOLICITOUS AND DEVOTED OF MORTALS AND CO-WORKERS S.H.G., IN THE VENERABLE AND TRULY CLASSICAL INSTITUTION OF HOLY MATRIMONY!"
OH, DEAR GOD.
DEAR GOD, IT'S MR. AND MRS. SUYDAM. IT'S THE HAPPY COUPLE...
...YOU AGREE, MY DEAR, THAT MY AUNT HAS ACQUIRED A MOST PALATIAL RESIDENCE IN THE VICTORIAN CONFINES OF CLINTON STREET.
THERE IS EVEN A SOFA WHICH, INGENIOUSLY, FOLDS INTO A DOUBLE BED FOR THOSE OCCASIONS WHEN YOU VISIT.
HM.
WELL, I WOULDN'T WISH TO BE THOUGHT ONE WHO STANDS ON CEREMONY...
HOO
HOO HOO HOO...

...TERRIBLE CASE, ALL THOSE MEN DEAD AND YOUNG MALONE HALF OUT HIS WITS. HE'S IN RHODE ISLAND, RECUPERATING.
THIS BOOK: IT WAS RIGHT ABOUT SUYDAM, BUT SOME OF ITS OTHER IDEAS... TO BE HONEST, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT.
WHY NOT PASS IT TO THE F.B.I.? THAT WAY, IT'S *THEIR* PROBLEM...
OH, GOD.
OH, EMILIO.
WHAT WE HAD, IT IS OVER...
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Sung by AL JOLSON
COLUMBIA

"10, BARNES STREET. AUGUST 13, 1926.
"DEAR MR. DERLETH:-
"YOU ARE RIGHT IN ACCORDING *THE HILL OF DREAMS* FIRST PLACE AMONG MACHEN'S WORKS--
"FOR I THINK THAT IT IS WITHOUT DOUBT THE FULLEST AND TRUEST EXPRESSION OF ETHEREAL GENIUS."
PITMAN? PITMAN, ARE YOU THERE?
PITMAN?
MR. *RANDY?* MR. RANDY, WHERE *BE* YE, NAOW?
YER AUNT SAYS AS YE'D BEST COME ON IN...
"DEAR MR. WANDREI:-- HAVING HEARD OF YOU VERY OFTEN FROM CLARK ASHTON SMITH, I WAS EXCEEDINGLY PLEASED TO RECEIVE YOURS OF THE 4TH..."
GEE, DON, IT'S GREAT YOU KNOW THESE FELLERS. YOU THINK I COULD *ILLUSTRATE* FOR THEM?
HOWIE, ARRIVE HOME IN ANY MORE *PATROL WAGONS*, YOU WON'T BE ILLUSTRATING FOR *ANYBODY.*

"...'NGAH'NG AI'Y ZHRO!"
DAMN YOU, YOU'RE NOT HIM! I BROUGHT THAT BOY INTO THE WORLD AND YOU'RE NOT HIM!
HUHHHHHHH...
...AND SO AFTER THE RED HOOK BUSINESS, YOU THINK THERE COULD BE SOMETHING IN THE OTHER STORIES?
WHAT I THINK IS, WHOEVER WROTE THIS WAS UNMANLY, MAYBE EVEN A RED.
BUT ALL THE SAME, THIS STUFF ABOUT SALEM'S WATERFRONT, THE MISCEGENATION...
I DON'T LIKE THAT, CLYDE. I DON'T LIKE THAT ONE BIT...
...NNNUHH...
OH CHRIST.
OH, CHRIST...
THEY'RE... THEY'RE DISGUSTING! OH GOD, LOOK AT THEM!
GET RID OF THEM! GET RID OF THEM ALL!

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Sung by Al Jolson
YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU
COLUMBIA
AAAUUUGHH! RACE, YOU FOOL, COVERING IT IN THAT POWDER! NOW WE CAN SEE IT!
...THOUGHT... THOUGHT IT WOULD H-HELP... THOUGHT...
..O-OGTHROD AI'F GEB'L...
MMMPF...
MMMPF...
"DEAR MR. HOWARD :-- REGARDING THE SOLEMNLY CITED MYTH-CYCLE OF CTHULHU, YOG-SOTHOTH, R'LYEH, NYARLATHOTEP, NUG, YEB, SHUB-NIGGURATH, ETC., ETC.--
"LET ME CONFESS THAT THIS IS ALL A SYNTHETIC CONCOCTION OF MY OWN, LIKE THE POPULOUS AND VARIED PANTHEON OF LORD DUNSANY'S PEGANA."
"10, BARNES STREET, PROVIDENCE, R.I., JUNE 25, 1931.
"MY DEAR MR. BARLOW..."
NOW, ROBERT, ARE YOU SURE THIS MR. LOVECRAFT KNOWS HOW OLD YOU ARE? IT JUST SEEMS...

WHUH...
WHAT IN GOD'S NAME...?
DARBY?
...AND I HEAR THAT IN CONNECTICUT, THE BRADFORD REVIEW AND EAST HAVEN NEWS HAS PUBLISHED A REVIEW OF MY FICTITIOUS *NECRONOMICON.*
I SUSPECT SOME YOUNG SCAMP LIKE BLOCH OR WOLLHEIM IS BEHIND THE HOAX, TRYING TO GET A RISE OUT OF YOUR VENERABLE GRANDFATHER.
OH, HOWARD, YOU DO SAY THE QUEEREST THINGS...
OH, MOM...

...I, I, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. REALLY, THIS IS SUCH AN HONOR...
OH, NONSENSE, YOUNG BARLOW. I HAPPEN TO THINK THAT YOU WOULD MAKE A MOST SPLENDID LITERARY EXECUTOR IN THE EVENT OF MY DEMISE.
GIVEN THE REMOTENESS OF THAT EVENTUALITY, YOUR YOUTH IS A CONSIDERABLE ASSET.
I PRONOUNCE THIS MAN DEAD AT...
...AT SEVEN FIFTEEN A.M.
232
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YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU
Sung by AL JOLSON
COLUMBIA
...NERVE OF THAT SHRIMP BARLOW? HPL AS GOOD AS SAID I'D BE HIS EXECUTOR, AND NOW HE COMES HERE AND TAKES ALL THE PAPERS!
YOU WAIT TILL I TALK TO SMITH! I'LL MAKE SURE NOBODY HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH THAT RUNT!
DON'T WORRY, AUGUST. THIS WILL ALL WORK OUT, YOU WAIT AND...

THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS
...SEEN THIS, LONG? GROVE STREET BOOKSTORE IS ASKING FOR COPIES OF THE *NECRONOMICON* AND LUDVIG PRINN'S *DE VERMIS MYSTERIIS.*
I GUESS THE OLD GENTLEMAN WOULD HAVE BEEN AMUSED...
Publishers Weekly
WOULD HE? HE CONSISTENTLY ADMITTED IT WAS *FICTION.*
AS A RATIONALIST, HE DIDN'T WANT TO CAST *MORE* SHADOWS ON A HUMAN MIND WITH ENOUGH *ALREADY.*
"JANUARY 11, 1951.
"DEAR ALLEN,
"A QUEER PROFESSOR FROM K.C. MO., HEAD OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY DEPT. HERE AT M.C.C. WHERE I COLLECT MY $75 PER MONTH, KNOCKED HIMSELF OFF A FEW DAYS AGO WITH A OVERDOSE OF GOOF BALLS.
"VOMIT ALL OVER THE BED. I CAN'T SEE THIS SUICIDE KICK."

NO, MAN, I'M SERIOUS. THIS MIRAGE PRESS BOOK IS A STUDY OF, LIKE, THE REAL NECRONOM-ICON.
IN THE MAIN ESSAY, THE WRITER SAYS THAT LOVECRAFT AND HOWARD AND THOSE GUYS KNEW IT WAS REAL, BUT THEY "MASKED THEIR CHRONICLES AS FICTION".
FAR OUT...
MAN, HE'S JOKING. DIDN'T YOU DIG THAT?
"LOVECRAFT WAS UNACQUAINTED BOTH WITH THE NAME AND THE WORK OF CROWLEY, YET SOME OF HIS FANTASIES REFLECT, HOWEVER DISTORTEDLY, THE SALIENT THEMES OF CROWLEY'S CULT.
WATKINS BOOKS
"THE FOLLOWING COMPARATIVE TABLE WILL SHOW HOW CLOSE THEY ARE:
THE MAGICAL REVIVAL
"H.P.L.
AL AZIF – THE BOOK OF THE ARAB.
AL VEL LEGIS – THE BOOK OF THE LAW..."
...FAKE ARAB-LOOKING CALLIGRAPHY BY THIS GUY ROBERT DILLS.
AT OWLSWICK, WE FIGURE THAT WITH YOUR REPUTATION AS AN ARCHAEO-LOGICAL WRITER, LYON, WE CAN MARKET AL AZIF AS THE "REAL" NECRONOMICON.
WELL, I COULD CLAIM TO HAVE ACQUIRED IT DURING MY REAL VISIT TO IRAQ.
IT'D BE A BREAK FROM RESEARCHING THE HELPLESS NEUROTIC...
"I CONJECTURED THAT IT HADN'T LOCKED THE FRONT DOOR AND THE GATE BECAUSE IT HADN'T KNOWN HOW.
"MY FEET WERE JUST TOUCHING THE NEXT TO LAST RUNG WHEN I HEARD SOMETHING COMING UP THE RAMP-- SOMETHING HEAVY AND SLOW AND PLURAL.
"CURIOSITY GOT THE BETTER OF FEAR, AND I DID NOT CLOSE MY EYES."

...SO WHERE THIS BEATS CULP'S NECRONOMICON IS THAT WE'D BE USING REAL SUMERIAN MAGICAL TEXTS, WITH NAMES CHANGED TO SOUND MORE LIKE LOVECRAFT.
AND IF WE LEAVE OUT THE BANISHINGS, IT'D MAKE A GREAT TEST FOR APPLICANTS TO THE SHOP'S OCCULT GROUP.
SURE. ANY SERIOUS SCHOLARS, SOMETHING THAT DANGEROUS, IT'S CLEARLY A HOAX...
0.00
...A REAL PRIVILEGE HAVING YOU DROP IN ON THE PRINTING PROCESS, MR. BURROUGHS.
WELL, STRIKES ME YOU BOYS ARE COOKIN' UP QUITE A CURSE WITH THIS ONE.
"KUTULU", HUH? MAYBE I'LL USE THAT IN THIS NEW THING I'M DOING...
...GET THIS STRAIGHT: THIS FERRELL ASSHOLE BLUDGEONS HIS GIRLFRIEND'S FOLKS TO DEATH WITH A CROWBAR AS SOME TEENAGE VAMPIRE CULT SACRIFICE?
YEAH, BUT THERE'S THIS OTHER THING, THIS NECRONOMICON THING. HAD IT WHEN WE PICKED 'EM UP IN BATON ROUGE.
FERRELL THOUGHT HE GOT "POWERS" FROM IT, ONE OF THE SHRINKS SAID...

...CALL IT THE SIMONOMICON BECAUSE OF ITS SUPPOSED AUTHOR.
IT'S A FAKE, BUT PEOPLE SAY SOME OF THIS STUFF ACTUALLY WORKS. THE BOOK'S GOT A BAD REPUTATION, KINDA.
I HEAR A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO'VE WORKED WITH IT HAVE THESE DREAMS, ABOUT SOMETHING POUNDING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF A DOOR, OR A WALL...
NECRONOMICON
WILLIAM?
Starry Wisdom
"...ESTABLISHED THAT DRIFTER GLEN MASON STRANGLED FOURTEEN YEAR-OLD SHEVAWN GEOGHEGAN IN THE SQUAT AT 1525 EUCLID STREET.
"YOU WERE HER FRIEND, MISS CALDER. WHY WAS THIS NECRONOMICON BOOK SO IMPORTANT TO MASON?"
"WELL, HE DECIDED THERE REALLY WAS THIS RACE OF ANCIENT SPIRITS HE WAS GOING TO SUMMON FROM BELOW."
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A1374
YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU
Sung by AL JOLSON
COLUMBIA

CTHULHU
ARKHAM
...REALLY ANCIENT FILES, CARL. I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY'LL HELP WITH THE HEAD-AND-HANDS KILLER.
OTHER THAN THE MALONE CASE IN RED HOOK AND THE *WATERFRONT* RAID IN NEW ENGLAND, THERE'S ONLY THIS BOOK OF *JOTTINGS*...
THIS IS PLENTY, THANKS, GLORIA.
I KNOW JUST THE SON-OF-A-BITCH FOR THIS CASE...
"...HEADS AND HANDS CUT OFF, AND THE TORSOS CARVED INTO THESE, I DUNNO. *FLOWERS*, I GUESS.
"I KNOW WE'VE HAD OUR DIFFERENCES, SAX, BUT YOU'RE THE BEST MAN I'VE GOT FOR THIS KIND OF WORK.
"WE'VE GOT YOU A ROOM ON CLINTON STREET, IN RED HOOK..."
"THANKS, PERLMAN. THAT'S A REAL *MITZVAH*."
OH FUCK...
...G'HARNE YR *G'YLL GNAII*, Y'NGHAI MHHG-GTHAA EP *UGUTH*...

I'M SAYING THAT SOMEHOW, EVERY ELEMENT IN THIS CASE IS CONNECTED TO THE WRITINGS OF H.P. LOVECRAFT.
THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING.
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YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU
...IS ALL ON ME. I SHOULD NEVER HAVE PUT HER THROUGH ALL THAT, AND NOW HERE WE ARE.
IT'S *MONTHS* SINCE LAMPER'S FUNERAL, SHE'S CHECKED OUT OF HER *APARTMENT*, NOBODY KNOWS WHERE SHE *IS*...
CARL? YOU'RE GOING TO WANT TO HEAR THIS. IT'S FROM THE HAVEN *PSYCHIATRIC* FACILITY...
Assistant Director Perlman

...WHICH SCIENTISTS BELIEVE IS A FORM OF PLASMA OR BALL-LIGHTNING.
WHY IT SHOULD HAVE PERSISTED FOR SO LONG IN THE SKIES OVER BROOKLYN IS A DIFFERENT...
JESUS CHRIST, IT'S THAT FUCKING CHURCH.
BARSTOW, I... I NEED YOU TO GET IN TOUCH WITH GLORIA FROM RECORDS...
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...THE BOOK THAT CARL WANTED.
A-AGENT BARSTOW, WHAT'S IT LIKE OUT THERE? I-IS THIS... THIS THING GETTING WORSE?
YEAH. YEAH, IT KINDA LOOKS THAT WAY.
LISTEN, I'D BETTER GET THIS OVER TO CARL'S PLACE. WE'RE NOT WORKING OUT OF HEADQUARTERS ANYMORE, SINCE...
FBI
FBI
COLUMBIA
YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU
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OKAY, I GOT THE BOOK. WE CAN...
JESUS. WHAT THE FUCK IS...?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT IT'S SPREADING ACROSS THE LOT.
IF YOU COULD PLEASE GET IN BEFORE IT REACHES THE CAR, THEN MAYBE WE CAN STILL GET TO PERLMAN IN TIME TO...
The Stars Are Right
Flower Friends
DONUT

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...GOT THE BOOK OKAY, BUT THE STUFF WE SAW COMING HERE, IT WAS...
OH FUCK.
C-CARL? A-ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? H-HOW LONG HAVE THEY BEEN...?
COUPLE OF HOURS. THEY'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING EXCEPT TAKING THE OCCASIONAL SHIT. THAT'S THE BOOK THERE, RIGHT?

COME ON.
LET'S GET IT INSIDE.
FBI
Providence

CHAPTER 12

"We may guess that in dreams
life, matter, and vitality,
as the earth knows such things,
are not necessarily constant;
and that time and space do not
exist as our waking selves
comprehend them. Sometimes I
believe that this less material life
is our truer life, and that our vain
presence on the terraqueous globe
is itself the secondary or merely
virtual phenomenon."

—'Beyond the Wall of Sleep',
Spring 1919

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THEY'RE LIKE *SPORES.* THE LIFE OF ANOTHER WORLD, FINDING PURCHASE IN A HUMAN MIND.
H.P. LOVECRAFT
3 TALES OF HORROR
THRIFT STORE PAPERBACKS, EXPENSIVE FIRST EDITIONS, IT DON'T MATTER. *ANY* EFFECTIVE NARRATIVE ACTS AS A CONTAGION, I GUESS.
AND WHATEVER THIS IS THAT'S HAPPENING, ITS GOT WRITTEN OR PRINTED WORKS RUNNING RIGHT *THROUGH* IT.
IT'S LIKE, YOU'VE GOT *LOVECRAFT'S* STUFF; YOU GOT ALL THE *CRITICISM* I'VE BEEN READING...
The Lurking Fear and other stories H.P. Lovecraft
Panther Horror
By H. P. LOVECRAFT and WILLIS CONOVER
FOREWORD BY HAROLD TAYLOR
LEAVES
H. P. LOVECRAFT A Critical Study
THEN THERE'S THIS, THE TESTAMENT OF ROBERT *BLACK.*
IF HALF OF THIS IS TRUE, THEN LOVECRAFT AND HIS STORIES WERE ENGINEERED TO *CAUSE* WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW.
WHAT HAPPENED TO *SAX,* WHAT'S HAPPENED WITH *BREARS, ALL* OF IT. PLUS, OF COURSE, THERE'S LOVECRAFT'S FUCKING *NECRONOMICON.*
Lovecraft at Last
AN *IMAGINARY* VOLUME THAT GENERATED SEVERAL *REAL* ONES, ALONG WITH A BUNCH OF SCREWBALL *OCCULTISTS* INSISTING IT'S ALL *TRUE.*
IF BLACK'S RIGHT, THE NECRONOMICON IS BASED ON SOMETHING CALLED THE *KITAB AL HIKMAH AL NAJMIYYA,* AN ARAB ALCHEMICAL TEXT.
HE ALSO SAYS THERE'S A COPY HERE IN AMERICA, IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.

SAINT ANSELM COLLEGE LIBRARY, IN MANCHESTER.
YOU THINK THAT COULD BE WHERE WE FIND MERRIL?
XII: THE BOOK

I MEAN, I'D THOUGHT PROVIDENCE ITSELF, MAYBE, OR SALEM WHERE MERRIL WAS HELD CAPTIVE. BUT THIS CULT, THIS STELLA SAPIENTE, THEY ORIGINATE IN MANCHESTER.
WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH IN BROOKLYN, WHERE THIS STARTED?
CHIEF? THERE'S MORE OF THESE RUBBER BAT THINGS THAN WHEN WE ARRIVED...
YEAH. NIGHTGAUNTS. WE SHOULD MAYBE BE MOVING BEFORE ANYTHING WORSE SHOWS UP.
AND THAT CHURCH IS ON TV, WITH UFOS ABOVE IT. I'M FIGURING MERRIL WOULD WANT SOMEWHERE LESS PUBLIC.
TO DO WHAT? I GET THAT YOU'RE CONCERNED FOR BREARS, BUT ALL THIS CAN'T BE CONNECTED TO ONE MISSING AGENT.
FBI
THERE'S NOTHING ELSE IT CONNECTS TO. BESIDES, WHEN SHE SPRUNG SAX, ONE OF THE WITNESSES SAID SHE LOOKED PREGNANT.
THAT'S WHAT'S WORRYING ME MOST. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY.
HOW ABOUT YOU, FULLER? YOU HOLDING UP?
YEAH, SO FAR. PENNY AND THE KIDS ARE WITH THE BUREAU. SAFE AS ANYWHERE, I GUESS.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT SAFE MEANS NOW. THE WORLD'S TURNING INTO SOMETHING ELSE.
LET'S GET ON THE ROAD. I FIGURE WE TAKE IT NICE AND SLOW UNTIL WE'RE IN THE CAR.
AND WHATEVER THEY DO, DON'T SHOOT ANY OF THEM. COME ON...

WELL, THEY'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING. THEY'RE JUST WATCHING US...
LISTENING IS MY GUESS. THEY DON'T HAVE ANY EYES. CARL, ALL THIS STUFF ON YOUR LAWN, WE'VE SEEN IT BREAKING OUT EVERYWHERE.
YEAH. GUESS IT'S WHAT YOU'D CALL AN INVASIVE SPECIES. LOOK, LET'S NOT MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE, OKAY?
FBI
YOU OKAY IN THE BACK THERE, BOSS?
SURE. I CAN READ THROUGH BLACK'S JOURNAL AGAIN, SEE HOW MUCH I CAN PUT TOGETHER.
I'M STARTING HER UP. WE'LL FIND OUT IF I CAN CRAWL US OUT OF HERE WITHOUT UPSETTING THEM.
FBI
FBI

THIS... IT ALL FEELS LIKE I'M DREAMING.
YOU KNOW? ON AN URGENT JOURNEY TO SOMEPLACE FAR AWAY, TO DO SOMETHING I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND...
IF I'M READING THIS RIGHT, DREAMS AND OUR WORLD ARE TWO EXTREMES OF A BI-POLAR REALITY, THAT CAN FLIP FROM ONE STATE TO THE OTHER.
IT SHIFTED IN OUR FAVOUR AEONS AGO, COMMENCING HUMAN HISTORY. EVER SINCE, INTERESTS FROM THE DISPLACED REALITY HAVE TRIED TO SHIFT IT BACK.
S-SO... OUR DREAMS ARE A VANQUISHED COUNTRY, AND IT'S TRYING TO OVERTHROW US?
THEN THIS ARAB PROPHET, HALI; THE DREAMWORLD TRANSMITTED HIS BOOK TO HIM AS A PROPAGANDA WEAPON...
LOOKS THAT WAY. IT STRUGGLES INTO PRINT OVER NINE HUNDRED YEARS, THEN ETIENNE ROULET BRINGS IT TO AMERICA, WHERE THE STELLA SAPIENTE COALESCES AROUND IT.
THEY IMPLEMENT THE DREAM-REALITY'S 'REDEEMER' AGENDA...
Y-YEAH. I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT, BUT IT'S EVIDENTLY WORKING. I-I DON'T THINK THIS IS A REAL HIGHWAY WE'RE DRIVING ON.

HOW DO YOU MEAN?
I MEAN IT'S LIKE THOSE DREAMS WHERE THE GEOGRAPHY IS COMPRESSED, AND THERE'S A LITTLE-KNOWN SHORTCUT TO EVERYWHERE.
WE JUST LEFT YOUR PLACE AND WE'RE IN PENNSYLVANIA. THE LOGIC'S FUCKED. HOW CAN SOME REDEEMER PROPHECY HAVE DONE THIS?
HM. WELL, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THE DREAMWORLD'S ALWAYS INTERSECTED WITH OURS IN CERTAIN REMOTE OR SUBTERRANEAN SPACES.
THE STELLA SAPIENTE'S STRATEGY WAS TO GET KNOWLEDGE OF THESE TO THEIR REDEEMER THROUGH AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT 'HERALD'.
THE REDEEMER WAS HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT.
THE HERALD WAS ROBERT BLACK.
I DON'T THINK EITHER OF THEM KNEW IT. BLACK MET LOVECRAFT IN 1919, JUST BEFORE LOVECRAFT'S MOST PRODUCTIVE YEAR.
LOVECRAFT WENT ON TO WRITE HIS STORIES, AND THEY SOMEHOW CAME TO PERMEATE MOST WESTERN CULTURE. THAT'S WHAT'S MOST INEXPLICABLE.
I MEAN, WHY DIDN'T ANYBODY NOTICE HOW UNLIKELY THAT WAS?

NOT JUST HIS WORK'S IMPROBABLE POPULARITY, BUT ITS EFFECTS: ALL THOSE PEOPLE INSISTING THE NECRONOMICON WAS REAL, ALL THE HOAX EDITIONS, OTHER WRITERS PLAYING ALONG...
THINK ABOUT IT. HAS THAT EVER HAPPENED BEFORE, WITH ANY WORK OF FICTION?
HUH. WELL, PROBABLY NOT SINCE THE FIRST CHRISTIANS DIDN'T REALIZE THE GNOSTICS WERE BEING SYMBOLIC.
Y'KNOW, BARSTOW, THAT'S NOT A BAD COMPARISON. RELIGIONS ARE FICTIONS THAT MODIFY THE WORLD. IT'S JUST THIS FICTION IS MORE RADICAL AND AGGRESSIVE.
YEAH, I'D SAY SO, JUDGING FROM THE VIEW OUT THERE. IT CHANGES AS YOU LOOK AT IT.
BOSS, YOU THINK IT'S WEIRD HOW CALMLY WE'RE TAKING ALL THIS?
I... I GUESS IT IS.
IT'S LIKE BARSTOW SAID. THIS FEELS MORE DREAMLIKE ALL THE TIME. THERE'S THAT ACCEPTANCE, LIKE EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENING IS SOMEHOW NORMAL.
THE WORLD INSIDE US... THAT'S CHANGING TOO. MAYBE THAT'S THE ONLY WORLD THAT'S CHANGING. I-IT'S LIKE...
WAIT A MINUTE. IS THIS NEW ENGLAND?

WELL, THE SATELLITE NAVIGATION SAYS WE'RE IN MASSACHUSETTS, BUT I DON'T THINK THIS IS NEW ENGLAND.
I-I THINK THIS IS WHAT THEY CALL LOVECRAFT COUNTRY.
CARL, THIS IS ALL WRONG. WHY AREN'T THE STREETS FULL OF PEOPLE FREAKING OUT OR EVACUATING?
YEAH, THAT'D BE LOGICAL. MAYBE EVERYBODY'S AS SWALLOWED UP BY THIS DREAMY DETACHMENT AS WE ARE.
I GOT THAT FEELING, LIKE IN A DREAM? I'M NOT GOING TO GET BACK TO PENNY AND THE KIDS, AM I?
I CAN'T REMEMBER IF I HAVE A BOYFRIEND.
WH-WHAT WAS THAT THING ABOUT MERRIL BEING PREGNANT?
THAT'S WHAT THE WITNESS AT THE HAVEN SECURE FACILITY SAID. I REMEMBERED HOW INSISTENT MERRIL WAS, IN SALEM, THAT NOTHING SEXUAL HAD HAPPENED.
SO I'M THINKING BEEKS OR ONE OF THE CULTISTS, BUT THEN WHY WOULDN'T MERRIL TELL US?
JESUS. CHIEF, YOU DON'T THINK...
HEY. HEY, WAIT. IS SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS CAR?
UH... NO. NO, I DON'T THINK SO.
LISTEN, WE DON'T HAVE SATELLITE NAVIGATION, SO I'M JUST GUESSING, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WERE IN MANCH... I MEAN, IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE IN ARKHAM.
ARKHAM
WHY DID I SAY MANCHESTER? IS THAT EVEN A REAL PLACE?
M-MAYBE IN ENGLAND. SO, WHY WOULD MERRIL BE HERE?

BECAUSE... BECAUSE ALL THE STORIES START HERE. ROULET, JAPHETH COLWEN, THE WITCH-WOMAN MASSEY...
THIS IS WHERE THE METEORITE FELL THAT PROMPTED US TO BUILD OUR CITY-DOMES. THIS IS WHERE THE STELLA SAPIENTE SITUATED THEIR BOOK.
THIS IS THE CENTER OF LOVECRAFT'S WORLD. WHATEVER'S HAPPENING WITH MERRIL, IT HAPPENS HERE.
CHIEF, WITH MERRIL... THERE'S NO WAY SHE COULD BE PREGNANT BY THE, YOU KNOW, THE GUY BARSTOW SHOT?
I'M ASSUMING THAT WAS WHAT'S CALLED A DEEP ONE. AND NO, PREGNANCY'S NOT POSSIBLE. EVEN IN LOVECRAFT, IT ONLY WORKS HUMAN MALE TO MARINE FEMALE.
I-I THINK THAT'S THE UNIVERSITY AHEAD. W-WAS IT SAINT ANSELM?
NO. NO, I'M GETTING MIXED UP. SAINT ANSELM, THAT WAS JUST THE NAME LOVECRAFT MADE UP FOR HIS STORIES, WASN'T IT?
SURE. THIS REAL PLACE COMING UP, IT'S NAMED AFTER THE RIVER THAT RUNS THROUGH HERE.
BEGINS WITH AN 'M'. IS IT... IS IT MERRIMACK UNIVERSITY, SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
MISKATONIC.

E-EXCUSE ME, SIR? WE'RE WITH THE FBI. ARE YOU PART OF THE FACULTY HERE? CAN YOU TELL US WHERE EVERYBODY ELSE IS?
SOME... SOME PEOPLE CAME. THEY WANTED A BOOK. MY STUDENTS... THEY'RE ALL AT A *DANCE*.
COULD... DO YOU THINK I COULD BORROW YOUR GUN?
UH... WELL, I DON'T SEE WHY NOT.
FBI
FBI
CARL? HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT HIS STUDENTS *DANCING*. DIDN'T I HEAR MISKATONIC WAS A *CATHOLIC* UNIVERSITY?
I... I THINK SO. GUESS THAT WOULD EXPLAIN ITS PROFESSORS CHANTING *INCANTATIONS* IN LOVECRAFT'S *DUNWICH* STORY.
READING BLACK'S *COMMONPLACE* BOOK, IT SOUNDS LIKE THE STELLA SAPIENTE WERE ON GOOD *TERMS* WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.
YEAH. THE 'HAUNTER OF THE DARK' CHURCH IN PROVIDENCE, WASN'T THAT CATHOLIC TOO?
FROM WHAT I GATHER. AND LOVECRAFT'S MIDWINTER CEREMONY, HIS *FESTIVAL*, IT'S HARD TO UNTANGLE THAT FROM *CHRISTMAS*. IT'S LIKE...
HEY, IS THAT *MUSIC?*
FBI
FBI

DON'T... DON'T WE KNOW YOU? YOU'RE STEPHEN, RIGHT? YOU WERE WITH SAX AT THE HAVEN FACILITY...
I SURE WAS. ALDO AND THE DHO-HNA LADY TOLD ME TO CONVERT THE OTHERS, THEN THEY TOOK THE BOOK AND WENT AWAY.
THEY LEFT ME TO PLAY FOR THE CELEBRATION PARTY. EVERYBODY'S THROUGH THERE...
THROUGH HERE?
YEAH. I'M PLAYING TO THE PIECES THAT CAN LISTEN AND APPLAUD, YOU KNOW?
WHAT IS IT, CHIEF? ANYTHING THERE?
LET'S JUST GO.

WELL, HE SEEMED LIKE A NICE KID. KINDA MADE ME WISH *I'D* MARRIED AND HAD CHILDREN...
CARL, THE LADY HE SAID TOOK THE BOOK AWAY WITH SAX, YOU THINK THAT WAS AGENT *BREARS?*
MOST LIKELY. MAYBE THEY TOOK THE BOOK BECAUSE IN A SECTION THAT *BLACK* COPIED, THERE'S A WAY OF *STOPPING* THIS.
THEY WOULDN'T WANT ANYBODY FINDING *THAT*, AND THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT BLACK'S *COPY*.
IF WE LOCATE *MERRIL*, PERHAPS IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO *FIX* EVERYTHING.
I'VE GOT A FEELING THAT YOU'RE *RIGHT*. SAY, REMIND ME, DID WE ARRIVE HERE ON *FOOT?*
UH... I THINK SO. WHY?

NO REASON. SO, WHERE DO WE LOOK FOR BREARS AND SAX?
DOWNHILL AND ACROSS THE RIVER IN ARKHAM ITSELF. MAYBE THE SITE OF THE WITCH-HOUSE OR SOMEWHERE LIKE THAT.
WASN'T ARKHAM WHERE THE WOMAN WHO WROTE PEYTON PLACE CAME FROM? GRACE SOMETHING? IT'S THE ORIGINAL AMERICAN TOWN WITH SECRETS...
HUH. AND DAVID LYNCH, HE FOLLOWED ON FROM PEYTON PLACE. I GUESS ARKHAM'S ALWAYS BEEN WITH US, IN OUR CULTURE.
I-IT'S LIKE YOU WERE SAYING ABOUT SPORES. AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE, THE BOOK AFFECTS PEOPLE, AFFECTS SOCIETIES, LIKE A CONTAGION.
NOT JUST HALI'S, OR ONE OF LOVECRAFT'S, BUT ANY BOOK.
FBI
I MEAN, IT KINDA MAKES SENSE THAT PEOPLE USED TO BURN SO MANY OF THEM.
LOOKS TO ME LIKE WE WERE PROBABLY BURNING THE WRONG ONES.
THERE. NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FOLLOW THIS STREET INTO TOWN AND WE CAN START SEARCHING FOR MERRIL.
I DON'T KNOW HOW FAR SHE'LL BE ABLE TO GET IN HER CONDITION. PERHAPS IF WE WERE TO...
AHOY THERE! WELL MET, FELLOWS. I SAY, WELL MET.
MIGHT YE BE SEEKING THE SAME DESTINATION AS WE OURSELVES?

FOR IF THAT WERE THE CASE, THEN YE'D BE MORE THAN WELCOME IN OUR COMPANY.
AIN'T THAT A FACT, NOW, MR. ANNESLEY?
OH, AYE, MR. ORNE.
MORE'N WELCOME.
IF... IF YOU WERE LOOKING FOR FBI AGENT MERRIL BREARS, THEN I CAN'T SEE HOW THAT COULD HURT.
YOU SEEM VERY YOUNG. IS ONE OF THESE GENTLEMEN YOUR... I DON'T KNOW, YOUR GRANDFATHER?
AH, THAT IS VERY FLATTERING. BOTH OF THEM ARE MY JUNIORS... BUT LET US WALK.
SO... LET ME GET THIS RIGHT: YOU'RE THEIR SENIOR?
CERTAINLY. I'M THE LAST SENIOR OF THE ORDER THAT'S LEFT. THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, IT WAS VERY... DEMANDING.
NAOW, AH'M RECKONIN' THERE'S SOME DUTCHY RUNNIN' IN THEM VEINS O' YOUR'N. MIGHT THAT BE RIGHT?
SURE. MY GRANMA. HOW IN HELL DID YOU GUESS THAT?
FBI

WELL, MOSTLY AH FOLLOWS MAH NOSE...
WAIT A MINUTE. WHEN YOU MENTION 'THE ORDER', DO YOU MEAN THE STELLA SAPIENTE? YOU'RE SAYING THEY SURVIVED THE TWENTIETH CENTURY?
BARELY. AFTER OUR GREAT SUCCESS IN 1919, IT WAS NOTHING BUT SETBACKS.
JAPHETH, WE LOST HIM IN 1927 WHEN HIS REINSTATEMENT WAS INTERRUPTED. WE COULDN'T EVEN RECOVER THE SALTS.
THEN IN '28 THERE WAS THE BUSINESS AT SAINT ANSELM WITH THAT RETARDED HALF-GOD OF THE WHEATLEYS.
AFTER THAT, THE COLLEGE DENIED ALL KNOWEDGE OF HALI'S BOOK. NOBODY HAD ACCESS TO IT.
THE 1930S WERE WORSE. FIRST DEAR HEKEZIAH PERISHED AND HER HOUSE WAS PULLED DOWN. PAUVRE HEKI!
SOON AFTER THAT, I MYSELF HAD A CLOSE CALL. AND IN 1937, WHEN THE REDEEMER DIED, HE WAS ALMOST UNKNOWN.
IT SEEMED THAT ALL OUR EFFORTS WERE FOR NOTHING. NEVERTHELESS, ALONE I PERSEVERED.
I'M... I'M LISTENING TO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, BUT I'M NOT SURE I'M TAKING IT IN.
THINGS KEEP SLIPPING MY NOTICE. HOW LONG HAS THE SKY BEEN LIKE THAT?
OH, THAT'S NOT SKY.
BUT SEE! THERE ARE OTHERS GATHERED AT THE MANGER. THEY HAVE WAITED FOR US!
FBI
FBI
FBI
FBI

CARL? FULLER? WHERE AM I? SOMETHING HAPPENED...
I FEARED WE HAD MISSED THE MOMENT OF THE *DHO-HNA*. COME, MONSIEUR, LET US QUICKEN OUR PACE.
I-IS THAT REALLY *MERRIL?* SHE LOOKS... WELL, RADIANT, I GUESS.
I HAVEN'T, YOU KNOW. I HAVEN'T SEEN HER IN A WHILE.

AND I THINK NEXT TO HER, THAT'S ALDO SAX. HE'S THE GUY WHO INVENTED ANOMALY THEORY.
I... I REMEMBER HE GOT FIRED FOR SOME REASON.
CARL. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING. IT MEANS A LOT TO ME.
NOW YOU'VE ARRIVED, I SUPPOSE WE SHOULD BEGIN.
MERRIL? MY GOD, YOU LOOK BEAUTIFUL.
I FEEL TERRIBLE THAT I GOT YOU INVOLVED IN THIS. THE THING THAT HAPPENED TO YOU IN SALEM...
CARL, THAT WAS ALL JUST A DREAM, EVERYTHING IN SALEM. DON'T FEEL BAD.
PERLMAN, LISTEN, ABOUT ME CUTTING OFF YOUR HAND. BACK THEN, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I WAS DOING...
OH. OH, YEAH. THAT WAS YOU DID THAT, WHEN YOU WERE CRAZY. I'M GLAD YOU'RE OKAY NOW.
PERLMAN, I'M STILL SOMEHOW FULLY CONSCIOUS. I'M IN A HELL OF MELTING FACTS. THERE'S NO WAY OUT.
I'M SURE YOU'VE BOTH GOT SOME CATCHING UP TO DO.
CARL, WE'D BETTER GET OUT ONTO THE BRIDGE.
THERE'S NO REASON TO DELAY. EVERYONE'S HERE WHO NEEDS TO BE HERE. THOSE AHEAD ARE MI-GO, CARRYING IMPORTANT DIGNITARIES.
YOU'VE MET MR. ROULET, MR. ORNE AND MR. ANNESLEY, OUR THREE WISE MEN, AND THERE'S MR. JOSHI HERE.
THE WOMAN IS HOUSING AN OBSERVER REPRESENTING THE GREAT RACE OF YITH.
AND THE SKY?

I THINK THAT'S AZATHOTH.

YES. IN SO FAR AS I ENTERTAIN ANY OF THIS, I THINK YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT... ALTHOUGH I'D NOTE AN ABSENCE OF PIPING.
Y-YOU'RE JOSHI, RIGHT? I KNOW THAT NAME FROM SOMEWHERE...
MR. JOSHI WAS THE OLD WORLD'S FOREMOST LOVECRAFT SCHOLAR. HE SOMEHOW FOUND HIS WAY HERE, AS DID WE ALL.
NOW, LET'S PREPARE...
OUR FUNGAL ASSISTANTS SHOULD POSITION THE TRAPEZOHEDRON AND THE CYLINDER TO FLANK ME AT THE BRIDGE'S CENTRE...
I'M NOT ALTOGETHER SURE. MY THOUGHTS ARE UNUSUALLY HAZY, BUT THIS SCENARIO DOES SEEM TO ANSWER SOME LONGSTANDING QUESTIONS.
D-DOES ANY OF THIS MAKE SENSE TO YOU?
IT HAD ALWAYS TROUBLED ME THAT IN LOVECRAFT'S SUPPOSED DREAM STORIES, THE VARIOUS PLACES ARE DEPICTED AS TERRESTRIAL LOCATIONS, EXISTING BEFORE HUMAN HISTORY.
THEN IN THE DREAM-QUEST THEY'RE SUDDENLY IN DREAMLAND. I SUPPOSE THIS EXPLAINS HOW BOTH COULD BE POSSIBLE.
WH-WHY IS THAT WOMAN DOING THAT DOCTOR STRANGELOVE THING WITH HER ARM?
IF SHE'S GENUINELY INHABITED BY ONE OF THE GREAT RACE, IT MAY BE HABIT.
SHE'S ACCUSTOMED TO A MUCH TALLER, CONICAL BODY WITH ITS SENSE ORGANS AT A HIGHER ELEVATION.
TO BE TRUTHFUL, I'M MORE INTERESTED IN WHOEVER IS HOUSED IN THAT COPPER CYLINDER.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

IN 'THE WHISPERER IN DARKNESS'. IT'S HOW THE FUNGI FROM YUGGOTH PRESERVE CONSCIOUS HUMAN BRAINS.
THE CYLINDER SPOKE EARLIER, WITH A DISCERNIBLE AMERICAN ACCENT. WHILE I'M AWARE THAT RATIONALLY THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING, I'D RATHER WONDERED ABOUT THAT...
HELLO? FORGIVE ME FOR INTRUDING, BUT ARE YOU ABLE TO HEAR US IN THERE?
TZZERTAINLY. DONE WITH THE WORK OF BREATHING I MAY BE, BUT AS MARCUZZ AURELIUZZ IZZ MY FATHER, I AM NOT YET DEAF.
ARE YOU FELLOW JOURNALIZTZZ? THEN I URGE YOU, JOIN ME IN THIZZ CONDITION! YOU CANNOT IMAGINE THE ZZTORIEZZ I'VE FILED...
N-NO DOUBT YOU'RE RIGHT. WE'RE SORRY TO HAVE DISTURBED YOU.
SO... SO THERE IS A BRAIN IN THERE, BUT WE STILL DON'T KNOW ITS IDENTITY...
O-ON THE CONTRARY. I-I BELIEVE I KNOW PRECISELY WHO THAT WAS.
I-IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I NEED SOME TIME TO THINK ABOUT ALL THIS.
...POSITION YOU AT THE FRONT. YOU CAN'T SEE OVER PEOPLE'S HEADS WITH YOUR HAND.
M-MERRIL? THIS IS ALL SO STRANGE. ARE YOU STILL YOU?
THAT... THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION. I'M DOING AND SAYING WHAT I HAVE TO, BUT IT'S LIKE I'M A PASSENGER IN MY OWN LIFE.
I-I THINK MY BABY'S CONTROLLING ME. CARL, CAN I USE YOUR COAT AS A BIRTH-RUG?

UH... SURE. LET ME TAKE IT OFF.
MERRIL, THIS BABY, IT'S THAT THING'S, RIGHT? FROM SALEM? I THOUGHT CONCEPTION ONLY WORKED THE OTHER WAY AROUND...
NO. NO, IT'S JUST SAFEST THAT WAY. IN OUR SPECIES, THE MALE HAS THE GENE FOR LIMITING GROWTH. IN THEIRS, IT'S THE FEMALE.
IT'S LIKE WITH LIGERS.
I-IZZ THERE TZZOMETHING THERE? IZZ IT THE ONE WHO MOCKZZ?
LIGERS... THAT'S THOSE TIGER-LION HYBRIDS, RIGHT? THEY NEVER STOP GROWING.
SO... YOUR BABY, IT'LL MATURE INTO SOME KIND OF GIGANTIC MONSTER?
I... I THINK A VERY SPECIFIC MONSTER. YOU KNOW, OF ALL THE PANTHEON, I'D ALWAYS WONDERED WHY HE WAS MOST HUMANOID.
WH...?
I-I THINK I KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. JESUS, MERRIL...
Y-YEAH, BUT MORE EXTREME.
HE'S ALMOST HERE, CARL. IT'S HAPPENING WITHOUT CONTRACTIONS. HE'S GOING TO BE THEIR HIEROPHANT, DREAMING A NEW PLANET...
YETH.
EXITHTENTH ITH A THINGLE THTEP FROM THE THUBLIME.

YOU THEE HOW EATHILY IT ALL THLIPS AWAY? HOW IT THUBMITTH BEFORE A THTRONGER FICTHION?
MITH BREARTH, PLEATHE BE ATHURED THAT THITH THERVITH THYALL NOT GO UNAPPRETHIATED.
IF YOU WOULD ATHUME YOUR POTHITHION...?
OH GOD. C-CAN I KEEP CARL WITH ME?
THERTAINLY. I THINK THAT BETWEEN THE DIGNITARIETH WOULD PERHAPTH BE BETHT.
MONTHIEUR ROULET, DO YOU THTAND READY TO PRONOUNTH THE NETHETHARY INCANTATHIONTH?
AT YOUR BIDDING, CELESTIAL ONE.
M-MERRIL? ARE... ARE YOU GOOD WITH THIS?
I... I THINK SO. MR. CARCOSA, AFTER HE COMES, WILL THERE BE A WORLD?
OH, YETH. THE WORLD WILL BE ATH IT THYOULD BE. NOW, IF YOU PLEATHE...

OH. OH, IT'S ***STARTING.*** I CAN FEEL IT. CARL... CARL, THIS IS ALL ***YOUR*** FAULT.
I KNOW. OH, MERRIL, I'M SO SORRY. I'M SO FUCKING SORRY...
"AND NOW BEHOLD, FOR THE GREAT SEA GIVES UP ITS LAMPS...
I-I'LL BE SICK. OH, GOD, I'M GOING TO BE SICK...
YOU'RE LOOKIN' A MITE ***PEAKY***, MISTER. HAOW ABAOWT WE TAKES THE ***AIR?***
Y-YES, THANK YOU. THANK YOU. OH, GOD...
"WHEN SHALL THE HEAVENS KNOW A MARVELLOUS CONFUSION, AND THE OLD STARS BE RETURNED TO US.
AAAA! OH, CARL, I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN IT. IT WAS ME. IT WAS ***ME...***
CARL? SOMEBODY, PLEASE HELP ME...
"THEN IS THAT SPLENDID POPE OF SLEEP AT LAST COME FORTH UNTO HIS MANSIONS...
NO. NO, SWEETHEART, NONE OF THIS WAS YOU.
AAAAAA! OH, ***FUCK!*** FUCK...
OH! OH! OH, NO! OH, ***NO...***
M-MERRIL, IT'S ***COMING.*** IT'S... OH, CHRIST...
"...AND IN GREAT REJOICING IS THE WORLD FORGOT."

AM I DEAD? PLEASE, SOMEBODY TALK TO ME...
H-HE SAID. LOVECRAFT SAID...
"A-AN OCTOPUS, A DRAGON, A HUMAN CARICATURE... BUT IT WAS THE GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE WHOLE WHICH MADE IT MOST SHOCKINGLY FRIGHTFUL..."
GI...
GIVE HIM TO ME.

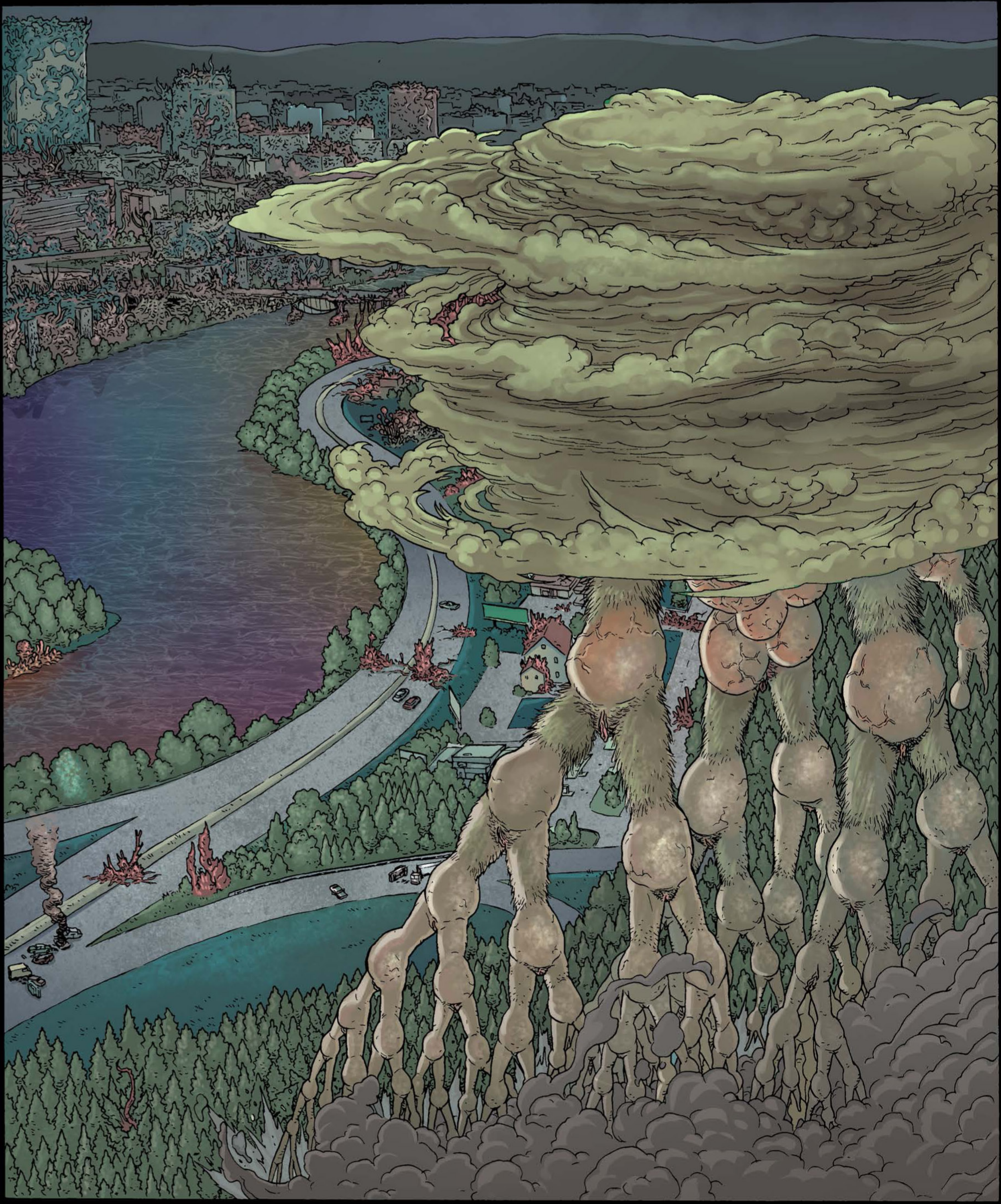
HE... HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE I EXPECTED. IT'S... IT'S MORE LIKE A FOLDED JEWEL, O-OR A CABBAGE...
I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING AT. OH, GOD, MERRIL...
YOU THYOULD THUPPLY HIM WITH THUTHTENANTH.
YOU MEAN... YOU MEAN I SHOULD FEED HIM?
BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT I SHOULD...
OH.
OH, LOOK AT THAT...

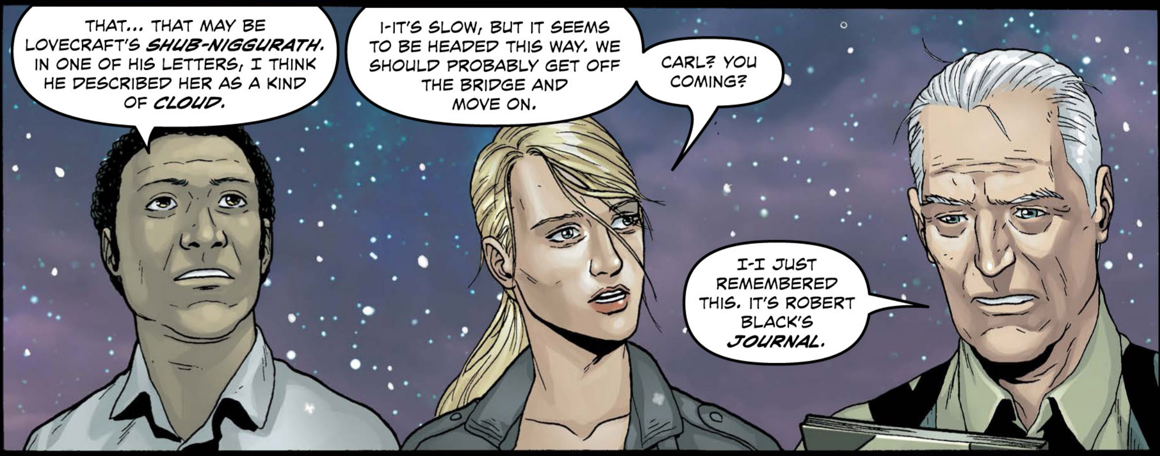
Hali's BOOKE OF The Wisdom OF The Stars
LONDON

IT'TH BETHT YOU PATH HIM TO ME. I MUTHT TAKE HIM TO THE WATERTHIDE BEFORE HE ITH HEAVY WITH THLEEP.
HE HATH MANY THOUTHANDTH OF MILETH TO CROTH BEFORE HE CAN RETHT AND DREAM.
I... I GUESS HE DOESN'T NEED LOOKING AFTER. A-ACTUALLY, THIS FEELS KIND OF SAD.
MERRIL, CAN YOU STAND? HERE, LET ME HELP YOU UP...
NAOW, DON'T YOU BE TELLIN' ME AS I'VE MISSED SOMETHIN'?
SHADRACH, IT IS NOTHING SHORT OF CERTAIN FACT THAT YOU'RE A CRETIN TO YOUR LUSTS.
MERRIL, I-IT'S BETTER. IT'S BETTER THE BABY GO WITH THEM.
I-I KNOW. MR. CARCOSA? MR. CARCOSA, WILL HE... WILL HE REMEMBER ME?
NO. HE ITH BARELY AWARE OF THITH UNIVERTH, THAVE ATH A DREAM OF HITH.
THO LONG, MITH BREARTH. TAKE CARE OF YOURTHELF, HUH?
HERE... TAKE MY COAT.
I-I'M STARTING TO ASSIMILATE THIS. NEW YORK ALREADY SEEMS LIKE AN IMPOSSIBLE DUNSANY FANTASY.
IS THIS OUR NEW WORLD?
I THINK IT'S YUGGOTH NOW.

I THINK MAYBE IT'S ALWAYS BEEN YUGGOTH.

HM. AND HUMAN REALITY HAS ONLY EVER BEEN A FRAGILE *CONSTRUCT* THAT WE BRIEFLY IMPOSED UPON THE FUNDAMENTAL CHAOS OF *EXISTENCE.*
PHILOSOPHICALLY, I CAN'T OBJECT TO THAT. I DON'T IMAGINE LOVECRAFT WOULD HAVE OBJECTED EITHER. BUT WHERE DOES IT *LEAVE* US?
WH-WHERE ARE LOVECRAFT'S *CHARACTERS* LEFT? BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT WE'VE ENDED *UP* AS...
HA. YES, I SUPPOSE WE HAVE. DON'T THINK I'M NOT AWARE OF THE *IRONY*.
BUT IN *THAT* CASE, OUR PRINCIPAL OPTIONS WOULD SEEM TO BE MADNESS OR *SUICIDE*.
DRAGGED TOWARDS THE ABYSS, STILL SCRIBBLING IN OUR *JOURNALS*...
I-I SUPPOSE THERE'S ALWAYS *ACCEPTANCE*, LIKE AT THE END OF 'THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH'.
NO. NO, THERE I CAN'T AGREE WITH YOU.
THE NARRATOR'S APPARENT EMBRACING OF HIS FATE IS LOVECRAFT INDICATING THAT HIS *MIND* IS CHANGING, EMPHASISING THE *HORROR*.
WELL, YES, IF YOUR MIND WERE ALTERING AND YOU WEREN'T AWARE OF IT, THAT WOULD BE UNSPEAKABLE.
EVEN SO, INNSMOUTH'S NARRATOR ENDS UP *HAPPIEST* OUT OF LOVECRAFT'S PROTAGONISTS.
WELL, I SUPPOSE FROM A *PRACTICAL* PERSPECTIVE.
ALSO, IT'S CONGRUENT WITH LOVECRAFT'S IDEAL STATE OF *ATARAXIA*, A FREEDOM FROM ANXIETY OR DISCOMFORT.
BUT CAN *ANY* OF US ACCEPT *THIS?* WHAT PLACE DOES THIS WORLD HAVE FOR FBI AGENTS OR *LITERARY* SCHOLARS?
S-SAY, IS THAT SOME SORT OF *STORMFRONT* MOVING IN OVER THERE?




THAT... THAT MAY BE LOVECRAFT'S SHUB-NIGGURATH. IN ONE OF HIS LETTERS, I THINK HE DESCRIBED HER AS A KIND OF CLOUD.
I-IT'S SLOW, BUT IT SEEMS TO BE HEADED THIS WAY. WE SHOULD PROBABLY GET OFF THE BRIDGE AND MOVE ON.
CARL? YOU COMING?
I-I JUST REMEMBERED THIS. IT'S ROBERT BLACK'S JOURNAL.

THERE'S... THERE'S STUFF IN HERE HE COPIED DOWN FROM HALI'S BOOK.
HE SAID THAT THERE'S INFORMATION... SYMBOLS AND TALISMANS THAT CAN STOP ALL THIS!
WELL... PERSONALLY, I'VE NEVER BEEN CONVINCED BY THE 'ELDER SIGN' ARGUMENT.
IT ALWAYS SEEMED LIKE ONE OF DERLETH'S EMBELLISHMENTS.
BUT... I MEAN... IF IT COULD SAVE THE WORLD...
CARL, I... I DON'T THINK THIS IS THAT KIND OF STORY. IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT HUMANS WANT ANYMORE.
I THINK WE SHOULD GO WITH THE INNSMOUTH TIDE.
I THINK WE SHOULD LEARN TO DWELL AMIDST WONDER AND GLORY FOREVER.
I STILL MAINTAIN THOSE LINES WERE INTENDED TO ENHANCE THE HORROR, BUT AS A EXISTENTIAL POSITION, YOU MAY HAVE A POINT.
MIND YOU, IT STILL DOESN'T MEAN WE HAVE A LEGITIMATE PLACE IN THIS WORLD.
BUT WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF IT, AREN'T YOU ITS LAST REMAINING SCIENTIST?
WAIT... BLACK'S BOOK! WHAT SHOULD I...?
'LOVECRAFT SCIENTIST'. NOW THERE'S AN AMUSING IDEA...
CARL, THAT CLOUD WITH LEGS IS GETTING NEARER, AND AS FAR AS ANYBODY KNOWS THIS IS A PREDETERMINED UNIVERSE, WITHOUT FREE WILL.
IT'S ALL DESTINY. IT'S ALL PROVIDENCE.
JUST DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO.

bridge had changed. It was now no more than a few brief yards from one side to
the other, and instead of spanning the torrential Merrimack it was now nothing
but a little ornamental bridge fording a narrow stream. The pregnant woman,
similarly, was now disappeared to be replaced once more by Lily, and I felt a
pang of instant guilt at having just walked by her and pretended not to know her.
Lily, who was again scattering confetti on the trickling surface of the stream,
looked at me with the same sad, pitying expression of concern that Freddy Dix
had shown me earlier, and said "You know it's always a new world there on the
So much for that. The only reason that I'm taking time to
mentioned. Also, last week Randall mentioned a forthcoming visitor to
less than an Irish nobleman called Lord Dunsany who's an author
speaks of as the greatest living influence on his own work. Apparently
speaking at the Plaza Hotel here on Monday night — conveniently it's
from the Vendome — and it seems that Carver has secured both of us
admission. It promises to be quite an eventful day, and hopefully I'll
to end this laziness and write more then.

PROVIDENCE COMPENDIUM is the complete volume of Alan Moore's quintessential horror series. Inside this tome, Moore deconstructs all of H.P. Lovecraft's concepts and mythos, reinventing the entirety of his work inside a painstakingly researched framework of American history. Both sequel and prequel to NEONOMICON, PROVIDENCE begins in 1919 and blends the mythical visions of HPL flawlessly into the cauldron of racial and sexual intolerance that defined that era on the East Coast of America. Every line from artist Jacen Burrows is perfectly honed to complete this immersive experience. The result is a breathtaking masterpiece of sequential art that will define modern horror for this generation. Invoking a comparison to a prior literary masterpiece is not something to be handled lightly, but in scope, importance and execution: PROVIDENCE is the WATCHMEN of horror.

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